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Spotlight: Transport for London

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Spotlight: Arrival

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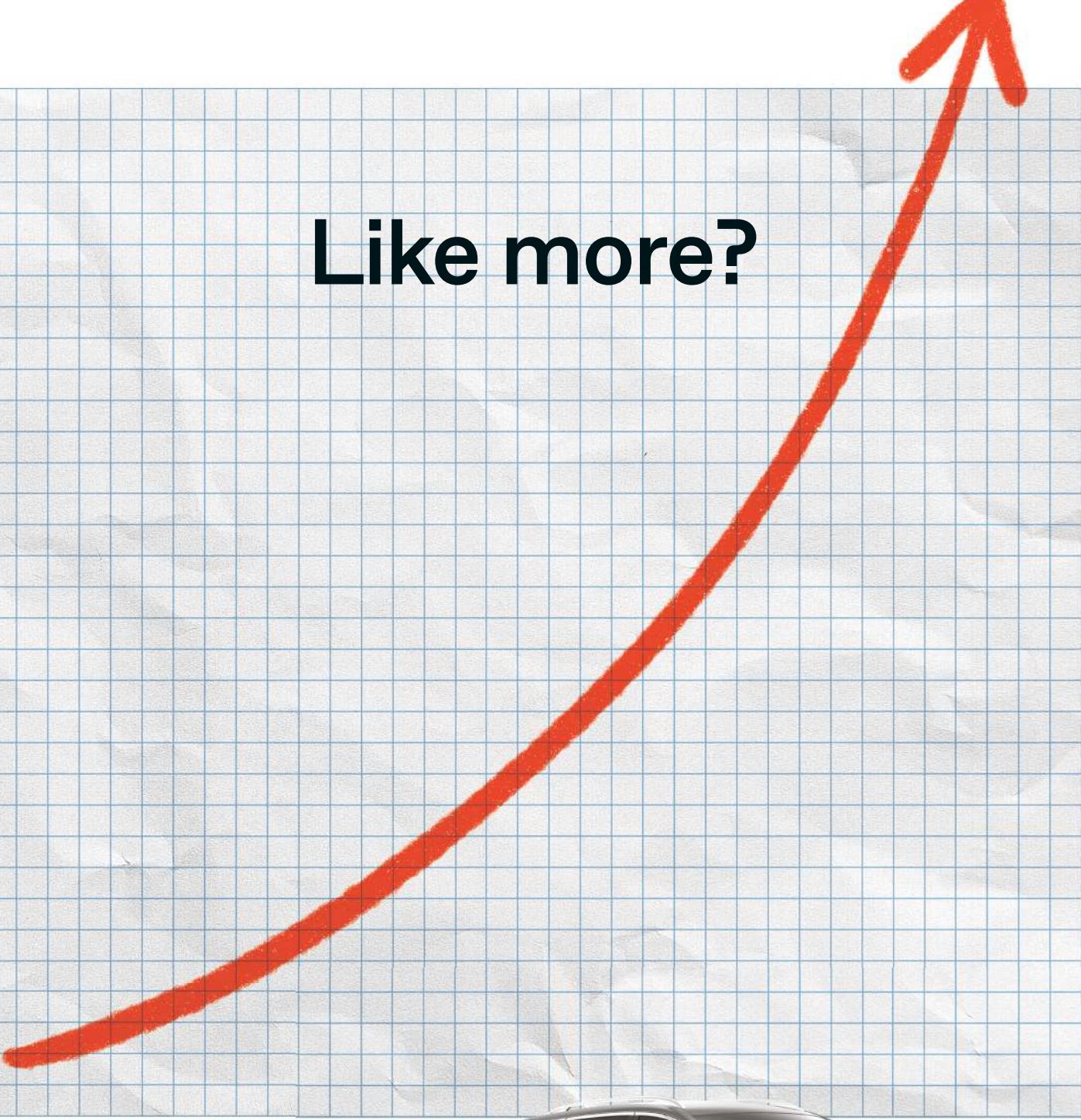
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# THE BIG PICTURE

I last mentioned road pricing in this column in August 2021, as the latest HMRC figures revealed the number of company car drivers paying benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax had fallen to 800,000. The Government – like previous administrations – is dragging its heels over this topic, scared of a political backlash of the type which stunned transport secretary Alistair Darling in 2005 when more than one million people signed an anti-road pricing petition to kill off his proposal.

However, road pricing is inevitable. As news editor Gareth Roberts points out on page 6, the Government will lose £35bn in revenues just from fuel duty and VED by 2050. Then there's BIK – although the Treasury could simply revise the table to remove the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions threshold and base the taxation solely on a fixed percentage of the P11D price.

People are warming to the idea of road pricing. Our *Fleet News* poll shows 55% of fleets in favour of pay-as-you-go pricing as long as it is a fair replacement for fuel duty. Our Fleet Manifesto campaign of 2015 with BVRLA and AFP forebear ACFO revealed similar levels of support for a consultation on the subject.

An Ipsos poll in 2020 found 60% of motorists supported the introduction of charging schemes in and around towns and city centres if they are designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve the local environment. This has not always been the case; an identical survey in 2007 found higher levels of opposition than support.

And, last year, the Social Market Foundation think-tank found that voters are now more likely to support road pricing than oppose it.

The Tony Blair Institute has laid out several road pricing options with varying degrees of complexity; fleets favour something that is straightforward, consistent and easy to manage – and it has to be a nationwide scheme. They have concerns about London (and, reportedly, Scotland) ploughing its own furrow on this, in the same way that regional interpretations of clean air zones cause issues with admin and communication.

The Transport Committee is in favour, while the Government did launch a consultation on the future of taxation after the 2020 Budget; the findings have still not been published.

The merits of road pricing were also due to be included in the Transport Decarbonisation plan but, to Whitehall's dismay, were omitted from the final report by a jittery Boris Johnson.

This is not the time for unnecessary populism; there is no real alternative to road pricing so acting now means any scheme will be carefully considered, agreed in consultation with the fleet sector and introduced in a timely manner. No sudden knee-jerk reactions please.



Stephen Briers,  
editor-in-chief,  
*Fleet News*



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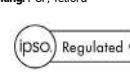
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Is there a major event you regret missing out on?

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The Ramones last ever gig in the UK at Brixton Academy. Car got broken into and couldn't be driven from Leeds to London

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I bought tickets for The Beautiful South at Sheffield Arena in the late 2000s but for some reason didn't go. It turned out to be their last ever show

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No, but there are some I wish I had missed

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I was once invited to play in a corporate football match at Carrow Road, but was unable to attend

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I was going to see Stevie Ray Vaughan at Hammersmith Odeon in 1990. But he was killed in a helicopter crash that year. I wish I'd been old enough to see Led Zeppelin at Knebworth too

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Glastonbury 2019 – one day I'll get tickets!

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Spice Girls reunion in 2008 (couldn't get tickets)

#### Photos istock, Chris Lowndes

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Missing the summer barbecue of *AM* editor

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Champions League final 1999 (a) on price and (b) fear my team would lose. Oh ye of little faith

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Missing Led Zeppelin's 2007 02 reunion show

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# 'Greatest barriers' to introducing road pricing are political

Fleet News poll reveals that more than half of fleet decision-makers favour 'miles driven' levy as the way to fill Government tax black hole

**By Gareth Roberts**

**A** road pricing system, based on miles driven, is backed by a majority of fleet decision-makers, research from Fleet News suggests.

The snap poll, taken in the wake of a report from MPs recommending road-user charging as the only way to plug a £35 billion fiscal black hole from a fall in revenues, showed 55% support for the tax change.

A sizeable minority, two-in-five fleets (40%), however, did not favour road pricing, while 5% said that they were unsure.

When the views of all respondents were added into the mix – not just fleets – those against the road tax change stayed virtually the same (39%), but less than half (42%) said they backed a pay-as-you-drive scheme. One-in-five respondents (19%) were undecided.

The Transport Committee report explains that the switch to electric vehicles (EVs) will wipe out road tax revenues of £35bn – £28bn from fuel duty and £7bn from vehicle excise duty (VED) – by 2050, unless an alternative is found ([fleetnews.co.uk](http://fleetnews.co.uk), February 4).

## ROLE OF TELEMATICS

It urges ministers to consider a road pricing mechanism that uses telematics technology to charge drivers according to distance driven, factoring in vehicle type and time of day.

Huw Merriman MP, chair of the Transport Committee, says it's time to have an "honest conversation" on motoring taxes.

"We need to talk about road pricing," he said. "Innovative technology could deliver a national road-pricing scheme which prices up a journey based on the amount of road, and type of vehicle, used."

"Just as with our current motoring taxes but, by using price as a lever, we

can offer better prices at less congested times and have technology compare these directly to public transport alternatives."

## POLITICIANS WARY OF NEW TAX

The report, however, concedes the "greatest barriers" to introducing road pricing are political. Several Governments, it says, have "foundered on the rocks" of introducing new taxes.

"Democratically-elected politicians are painfully aware that advocating the introduction of new taxes, however well intentioned, is unlikely to engender general popularity."

The political risks associated with road pricing have made it "too toxic" a prospect for successive Governments, it adds.

A road pricing scheme was first considered as early as the 1960s and was raised again by then Transport Secretary Alistair Darling in 2005.

However, the plans were ditched after a backlash from road users and an anti-road pricing petition gained more than one million signatures 15 years ago.

More recently, the merits of a national road pricing scheme to plug the shortfall from road taxes, including fuel duty, were expected to be

investigated as part of the Government's Net Zero Strategy, which was published in October, but were omitted from the final report.

Furthermore, the Treasury launched a consultation which covered the future of VED, with direct reference to EVs, following the March 2020 Budget. It has still not published its findings.

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), believes some sort of road toll charging system is now inevitable, given the Government faces a significant fall in fuel duty.

"From an AFP perspective, we don't really like it, but if you think about the other options, there really isn't another, apart from road charging," he said.

## SCOTLAND CONSIDERS ROAD CHARGING

Hollick highlights the Government's track record with major IT projects as a cause for concern, alongside the issue of trying to agree a common approach with the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

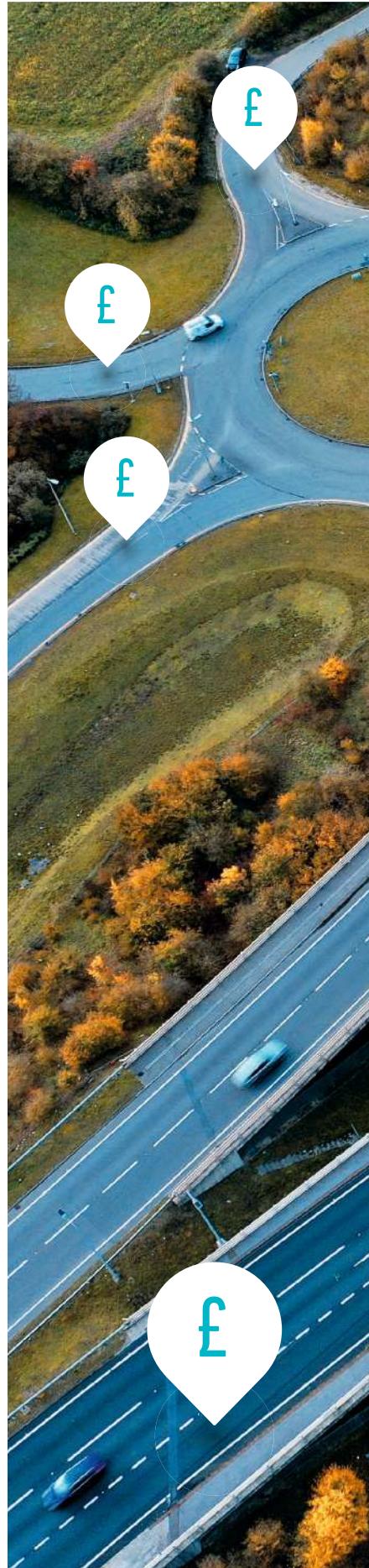
"The whole thing just scares me, because I can see a future where England does one thing, Scotland does another and it unfairly taxes the poor," he added.

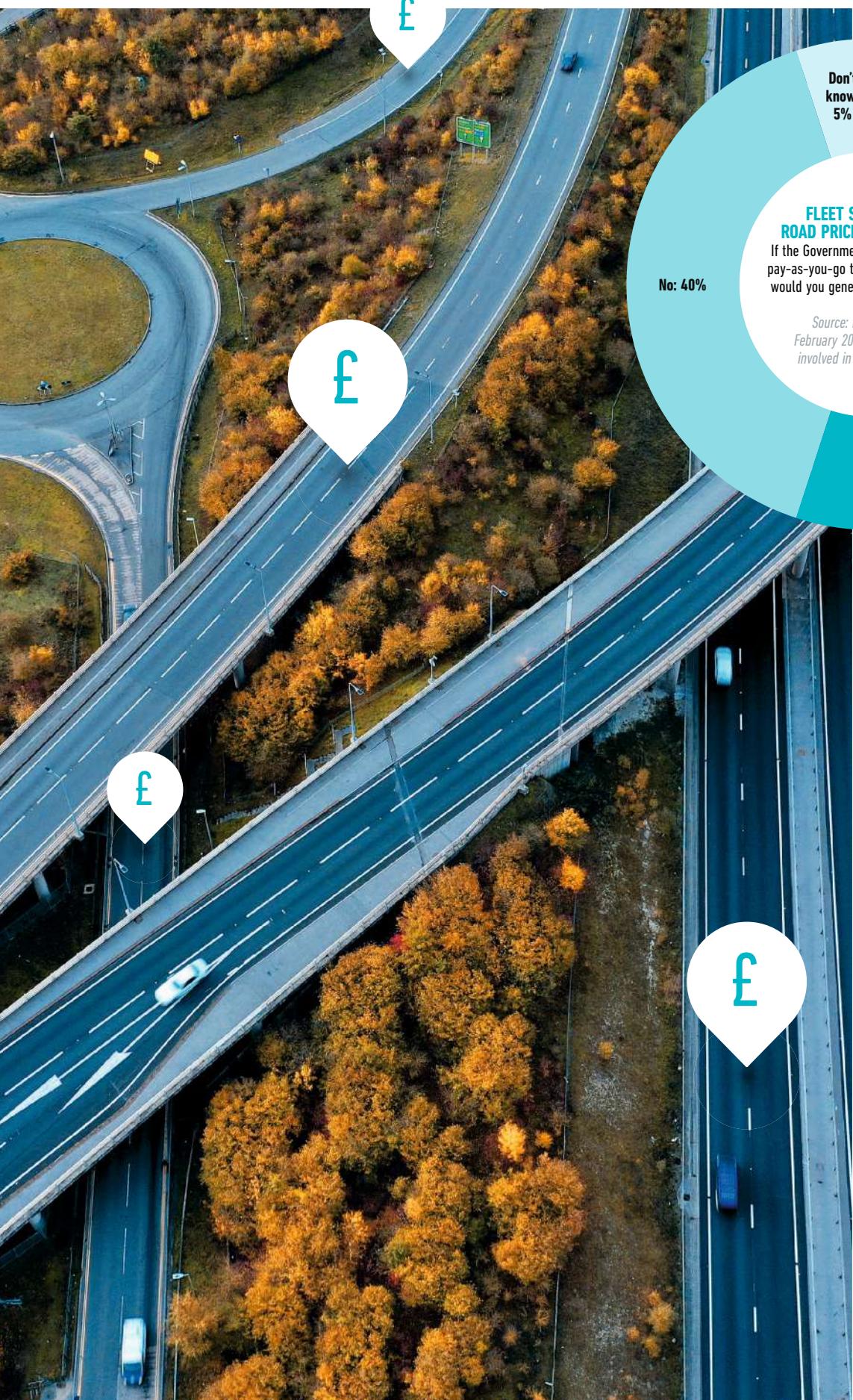
"It needs to be done,



**“WE DON’T REALLY LIKE IT, BUT IF YOU THINK ABOUT THE OTHER OPTIONS, THERE REALLY ISN’T ANOTHER, APART FROM ROAD CHARGING”**

**PAUL HOLICK, AFP**





No: 40%

Don't know:  
5%

Yes: 55%

### FLEET SUPPORT FOR ROAD PRICING ALTERNATIVE

If the Government were to introduce a pay-as-you-go tax to replace fuel duty, would you generally support the idea?

Source: fleetnews.co.uk,  
February 2022, UK respondents  
involved in fleet management

but it needs  
to be done  
fairly and equitably."

Fuel duty and VED are national taxes levied by the Treasury. Bearing in mind the partial devolution of transport policy, the report acknowledges that agreement between the UK Government and the devolved administrations will be key to developing and implementing an alternative road charging system.

Ministers in the Scottish Government, however, are said to be considering a pay-as-you-drive scheme to help meet climate change targets.

It comes 15 years after the Scottish National Party (SNP) vowed to abolish road tolls in its manifesto, with former First Minister Alex Salmond describing them as a "the poll tax on wheels".

The SNP fulfilled its campaign pledge to axe all remaining road charges in Scotland, including those on the Forth and Tay bridges, but ministers now acknowledge that some form of road pricing is inevitable.

A paper by the Transport Scotland government agency confirms that the option is being examined as part of the SNP/Green administration's plan for a 20% reduction in the distance travelled by cars by the end of the decade.

While the idea is at an early stage, it could mean motorways such as the M8 being tolled and a return to charges for bridges and tunnels.

### PATCHWORK OF LOCAL SCHEMES

Fleet operators, working nationally and cross-regionally, are also concerned about local road charging schemes, such as congestion zones or clean air zones (CAZs), with the Transport Committee report suggesting they could compromise or even scupper a national system.

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**C**Duncan Buchanan, policy director at the Road Haulage Association (RHA), told MPs on the committee: "One of the enemies for us is local complexity. You have different rules in London, different rules in Manchester, different rules in Birmingham, and it just adds more and more complexity."

Fleets face a growing patchwork of local schemes, with Oxford opening the country's first zero emission zone (ZEZ) at the end of February, while London, which already operates the ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) and the congestion charge, is looking at the merits of introducing its own road pricing scheme.

Such a system, says Mayor of London Sadiq Khan could abolish all existing road user charges in the capital and replace them with a scheme where drivers pay per mile, with different rates dependent on how polluting vehicles are, the level of congestion in the area and access to public transport.

However, the Transport Committee report warns that the devolution of road pricing could lead to the introduction of "clunky, unconnected schemes" that charge users the same price for driving one mile into the zone as those who drive across it for hours in a day.

"The more regional schemes that are created, the harder it will eventually be for the Government to implement a functional national system," it said.

#### INCONGRUOUS LOCAL SCHEMES

The MPs argue that fuel duty and VED are Treasury taxes that require a national-level replacement rather than a "patchwork of incongruous local schemes".

Indeed, the report suggests that the introduction of a range of more-or-less-generous local road pricing schemes could create regional inequality and may make it impossible to deliver a national road pricing scheme.

"The simultaneous operation of local and national road pricing schemes would subject drivers to confusion and unfair double taxation," it says.

Ben Foulser, head of Future Mobility at KPMG UK, believes it is imperative that any national road pricing system takes account of these local charging zones.

"There are a number of local clean air and congestion charging schemes in existence in the UK already and any

national system developed needs to incorporate those, rather than add to them," he said.

The committee report also highlights how Government departments must work together. The Treasury is responsible for taxation policy, including motoring taxation; the Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for road connectivity.

#### ARM'S-LENGTH BODY

It says the Government must work on a cross-departmental basis to join up policy on maintaining tax revenues, facilitating road connectivity and supporting the shift to zero emission vehicles. It recommends that the DfT and the Treasury should work together to set out their preferred options for replacing fuel duty and VED and establish an arm's-length body with an appointed individual to evaluate the potential merits of those options.

Furthermore, it says that the arm's-length body should be tasked with recommending an alternative road charging mechanism by the end of this year.

Toby Poston, director of corporate affairs at trade body the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), who gave evidence to the committee in October, agrees.

He said: "A key role in the implementation of the required technologies sits with multiple Government agencies. We need to see them working in close collaboration, receiving additional support in order to meet the challenges of this monumental shift." (For more from Poston, see opinion column alongside).

Michelle Gardner, head of public policy at Logistics UK, says that any new charging system, must be "fair, proportionate, and provide businesses with the certainty they need" to plan their long-term investments into alternative fuelled vehicles.

"As the Transport Committee identified, road charging must replace, rather than add to, existing motoring taxes and be revenue-neutral to limit the financial burden placed on logistics businesses, with all investment going back into road maintenance and improvement," Gardner concluded.

**£28bn**  
raised from fuel duty

**£7bn**  
raised from vehicle  
excise duty

## Time to 'get off the fence' and get started on road pricing



**TOBY POSTON**  
BVRLA DIRECTOR  
OF CORPORATE  
AFFAIRS

Like many across the industry, I read the recent Road Pricing report from the Transport Select Committee with great interest.

It is great to see the topic given the attention it deserves.

If we delve below the rhetoric and scary headlines into the real detail of how a national scheme could work and what it could deliver, we may finally make some progress.

When we at the BVRLA gave evidence to the committee in October, we highlighted how road pricing involves a total rethink about the way road use is taxed and how we incentivise certain transport behaviour.

It has always been a controversial topic and one that successive Governments have chosen to avoid.

As the vehicle parc moves towards net zero, urgent progress needs to be made and politicians need to engage with industry to develop a workable solution.

In short, policymakers need to get off the fence and start providing a roadmap for the future of motoring taxation.

BVRLA members have set out their road pricing principles and we are delighted that so many of them have been covered by the committee's report. Among other key asks, the report acknowledges the need to make any system revenue-neutral, also considering the needs of essential road users.

However, there are three key challenges the committee has largely overlooked in its report, and they are issues that the Government must urgently address if it is to have any hope of laying solid foundations for a new road pricing regime.

First, the requirement for a national framework has not been fully acknowledged. Leaving the development of road pricing in the hands of devolved nations or local authorities will lead to inconsistent implementation and create chaos for road users, with fleets hit particularly hard. Only a UK-wide framework will provide a fair and simple way of replacing national motoring taxes such as VED and fuel duty.

Second, the Government needs to set some simple objectives. There is a real danger that the purposes of road pricing and clean air zones are merged and the lines between them blurred.

An undertaking of this scale cannot afford to suffer from 'Project Creep'.

In the short term, national road pricing and its associated fees are more likely to be accepted if they are used as a transparent mechanism for replacing current motoring tax revenues, with this money then allocated against the huge price of upgrading the UK's road network and zero-emission vehicle infrastructure.

Congestion and air quality are best addressed at a local level with targeted clean air or congestion zones.

Finally, the administrative complexity and cost of a new scheme must be considered from day one so investment can be put behind the Government agencies and systems that are vital to a successful roll out.

Many of them are already creaking under their current burdens, with service levels that would not be accepted in the private sector. Fleets are often treated as second class customers and this is a classic example of where the Government needs to 'level-up' by investing in improved digital infrastructure and modern working practices.

The internal combustion engined vehicle phase-out target and the need for road pricing are inextricably linked.

The Government has a delivery plan for the former, and it needs to start talking about its strategy for the latter.



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**Arnold Clark**  
VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

# Will drivers be left short when their new electric vehicles are delivered?

EVs should arrive 'with a minimum of 100 miles' range' available in battery, says fleet manager

By Gareth Roberts

**T**he amount of charge an electric vehicle (EV) is delivered with varies considerably, a *Fleet News* poll suggests.

More than a third (35%) of respondents said plug-in vehicles were being delivered fully charged, while 28% reported their electric car or van arriving with the battery charged to just a quarter of its capacity.

Traditionally, fleets and company car drivers would have expected their new internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle to be delivered with a quarter of a tank of fuel.

## MIXED PICTURE

However, charge point availability and whether an EV is delivered on a low-loader or comes under its own steam are creating a mixed picture for fleets.

National Grid fleet manager Lorna McAtear says it's a bit "hit or miss".

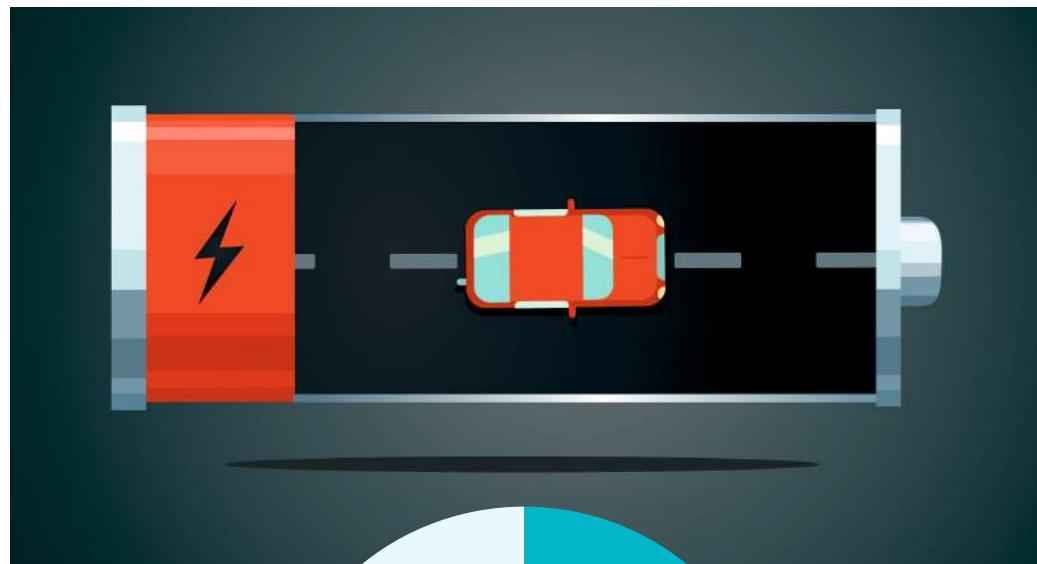
"We are realistic and know that if someone is driving the vehicle to you then you are never going to have it arrive with 100% battery, but we do expect some charge," she said.

"We understand that, dependent



**■■■ A SMALLER BATTERY WITH A MAX RANGE OF 120 MILES AT 50% IS GOING TO LEAVE THE CUSTOMER WITH ONLY 60 MILES ■■■**

LORNA McATEAR,  
NATIONAL GRID



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on where the driver lives versus where the best public charge point currently is for the delivery driver, will have an impact."

The challenge, explains McAtear, comes when only a percentage of charge is considered.

"Larger vehicles with bigger batteries have more miles so 50% is still going to be more than 100 miles for the end customer to work out what they want to do. However, a smaller battery with a max range of 120 miles at 50% is going to leave the customer with only 60 miles," she said.

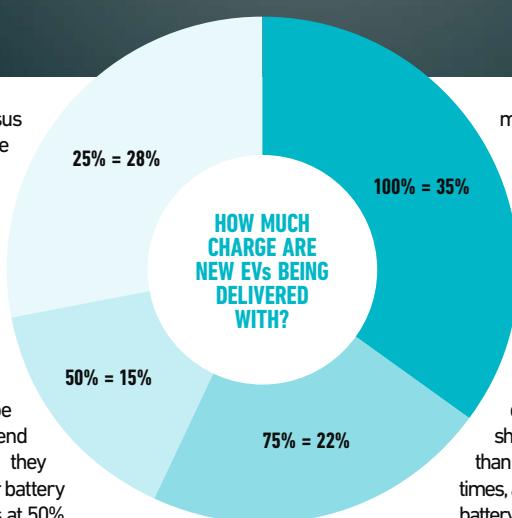
McAtear believes EVs should arrive with a minimum of 100 miles' range.

National Grid's electric commercial vehicles all arrive at its converter with between 50% and 80% of charge and are topped up after work is completed.

Cars from manufacturers delivering on the backs of other vehicles, such as Polestar and Audi, all arrive with 100% charge.

However, McAtear says some EVs being driven to delivery sites arrived with as little as 25% and some were at 40%, while Ford and Jaguar Land Rover aim to deliver with at least 75%.

Nick Hardy, sales and marketing director at Ogilvie Fleet, says that most dealers advise their target is to deliver



battery electric vehicles (BEVs) with a minimum of 100 miles range unless otherwise confirmed by the leasing company.

Lex Autolease, meanwhile, says it has aligned its policy to ensure that all battery-powered EVs are delivered with at least a quarter of the charge remaining.

DMN Logistics, which published a white paper on EV deliveries last year, says that, with shorter driving ranges on a charge than an ICE car, longer 'refuelling' times, and heavier vehicles thanks to the battery weight, establishing a successful EV logistics plan can prove challenging.

"While it might seem appropriate to circumvent the range-limited distance an EV can travel by placing it on a flatbed or a transporter, there simply isn't the capacity – whether that's drivers or lorries – to carry the vehicle volumes the automotive sector needs delivering each day across the country," the white paper says.

"EV weight – usually greater than an ICE car because of the battery – also limits what vehicles can be used to safely load EVs, with smaller transporters reaching legal limits in terms of payload and total weight."

As such, trade plate logistics are here to stay, says DMN Logistics, but vehicle movements must be adapted to the new electric landscape.



**PEUGEOT**  
**PROFESSIONAL**  
FOR THE DAY AHEAD

# NEW ELECTRIC VAN RANGE

**100% ELECTRIC**

PEUGEOT i-Cockpit® - Access zero emission zones

**WLTP (1) Combined Fuel Consumption for the PEUGEOT electric van range in MPG (l/100km): Combined N/A. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): 0g/km.**

(1) The fuel consumption or electric range achieved, and CO<sub>2</sub> produced (where applicable), in real world conditions will depend upon a number of factors including, but not limited to: the accessories fitted (pre and post registration); the starting charge of the battery; variations in weather; driving styles and vehicle load. The PEUGEOT electric van range are battery electric vehicles requiring mains electricity for charging. The WLTP (Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure) is used to measure fuel consumption, electric range and CO<sub>2</sub> figures. Figures shown are for comparison purposes and should only be compared to the fuel consumption, electric range and CO<sub>2</sub> values of other cars tested to the same technical standard.

# Government needs to accelerate through the gears on EV charging

Calls for new regulatory body, VAT cut for public charge points and levelling up north and south

By Gareth Roberts

**T**he Government is being urged to do more to ensure the electric vehicle (EV) charging network is fit for purpose, with accessibility and cost both major issues for fleets.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) has called for a new regulator called Ofcharge (the Office of Charging) to govern targets and ensure every part of the country has accessible, available and affordable charging for their EVs.

Meanwhile, the AA says that more should be done to help potential EV drivers without access to off-street parking who cannot benefit from home charging at preferential rates.

It wants the Treasury to cut VAT on electricity to 5% for public charge points to match the rates homeowners with their own charging posts pay.

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) says about 40% of drivers across all fleets do not have a drive or any other access to a charger. However, when it comes to light commercial vehicles (LCVs), it believes the figure to be nearer 70%.

The AFP formed a Kerbside Charging Group in October to tackle EV adoption concerns among fleets where drivers



ISTOCK.COM/BONA

**40%**

of fleet drivers  
do not have  
a driveway

can't access home chargers and is creating a national database showing where charge points are most in need.

Paul Hollick, chair of the AFP, told *Fleet News*: "Fleets are rapidly electrifying their car parc and the first area of focus is drivers with driveways and depot charging – but, in order to move to 100% electric, the agenda also needs to include those without access to a home charger."

"Anything the Government can provide to encourage EV adoption for those without access to home chargers would be fantastic."

"VAT subsidy is one area, but bigger issues are the quantity of near-to-home charge points nationally and the price of these per kWh, when they do exist."

The SMMT has launched a seven-point plan, designed to drive collaboration between Government and industry, which calls for mandated targets for infrastructure roll-out, backed by an independent regulator.

The new regulatory body, Ofcharge, would monitor the market, including charging price levels and affordability, and enforce minimum standards.

The SMMT says this would keep the consumer at the heart of infrastructure planning and roll-out to ensure every region of the UK is in readiness for the

end of sale of new petrol and diesel cars in 2030.

LeasePlan UK managing director Alfonzo Martinez says it's "vital" that the development of charging infrastructure keeps up with increased EV adoption rates.

"With 2030 fast approaching, it feels as though the pressure is on fleet decision-makers to adopt EVs quicker, but this pressure should, instead, be felt by the Government," he said.

"While incentives such as the EV HomeCharge Scheme have been developed to help out individuals in the most complex scenarios at home – like renters and those living in flats – the Government also needs to ensure fast public charging and provision for businesses improves at a decent rate."

Large corporations with a high volume of petrol or diesel vehicles have a big part to play in the transition to electric, explained Martinez.

However, he asked: "How can a nationwide fleet expect to make a smooth transition to EV when they're better able to adapt in the south than the north? To efficiently make the switch to electric, it's incredibly important that the Government fixes this north-south divide."

At the end of 2020, the ratio of electric cars to standard public chargers was 1:37 in the north of England, compared with 1:26 in the south – and in 2021, the ratio deteriorated significantly in the north to 1:52, compared with 1:30 in the south.

Since 2011, Government, local authorities and the charging infrastructure sector have successfully delivered a 3,000% increase in the number of standard public charge points, and the UK's provision of one rapid charger per 32 battery electric vehicles is the best in the Western world.

The only countries ahead are all in the Far East – China (1:11), South Korea (1:12) and Japan (1:17), says the SMMT.

However, as demand for EVs has surged – accounting for more than one in six new cars in 2021 – standard public charging infrastructure has struggled to keep pace.

Plug-in cars on the road grew by 280.3% between 2019 and 2021, but standard charge points increased by just 69.8% over the same period.

Meanwhile, the SMMT says that battery electric cars in the parc rose by 586.8%, whereas rapid/ultra-rapid charger stock grew by only 82.3%.



**IT'S INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT FIXES THIS NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE**

ALFONZO MARTINEZ,  
LEASEPLAN UK

# Stellantis reveals structural change to offer fleets 'single point of contact'

UK director for B2B describes new strategy for Peugeot, Citroën, Vauxhall and FCA brands

By Matt de Prez

**S**tellantis has outlined a new approach to fleet sales, which sees multiple functions combined at group level following a restructure led by recently appointed UK director for B2B James Taylor.

Large fleets, leasing/rental companies and specialist fleets are now managed at group level, giving them access to all 14 brands under the Stellantis umbrella through one point of contact.

The automotive giant was formed early last year by the merger of Groupe PSA – which had previously acquired Vauxhall – and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA).

Smaller fleets and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) will continue to interact with the group at a brand level, although a greater focus on inter-brand fluidity is being enabled via the new structure, according to Taylor.

He said: "The biggest benefits are with the customers. We know they want a single point of contact, so the fact we can talk to them on a Stellantis basis is a big advantage. Because each account manager is looking after fewer accounts we can build a stronger relationship with those customers."

"It is a big change for our customers and our team. Now, 80% of team members have changed at least part of their job."

Three fleet directors will manage the existing Stellantis brand groups.



**“WE WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER CUSTOMERS MORE CHOICE IN EACH SEGMENT”**

JAMES TAYLOR, STELLANTIS



The Alfa Romeo Tonale SUV is part of the new model line-up

Alfa Romeo, Abarth, Fiat and Jeep are led by Laurence Hagger, former head of used cars, remarketing, rental, contract hire and leasing at FCA.

Iain Montgomery, former FCA fleet director, has become fleet director of the Peugeot, Citroën and DS brands.

A fleet director for Vauxhall will be appointed in due course.

The fleet directors set the direction for their respective brands, but the management of, and liaison with, individual customers is done by a central team of account managers.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Central fleet operations are managed by Scott Westerby, who takes the role as fleet operations director.

The former Peugeot, Citroën and DS fleet director is responsible for all the behind-the-scenes operations, such as demonstrators, events and deal management.

Regional fleet teams will manage smaller clients and will talk to customers primarily around the individual brands that they represent, but if there's a customer that has an interest in another group marque they can still assist.

Taylor added: "Fleet is the only area of the business where we are talking to customers on a Stellantis basis rather than as an individual brand. There's a unique challenge to

communicate that to our customers."

He said the majority of fleets already work with more than one brand within Stellantis, so the new approach should be more straightforward with one point of contact.

"We can offer everything from a Citroën Ami to a DS 9 or an Alfa Stelvio. As the product portfolio fills out we will be able to offer customers more choice in each segment – that probably does give us a USP in the marketplace," Taylor added.

While the automotive sector continues to suffer from the aftermath of Brexit, the coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing semiconductor shortage, Taylor believes the new approach will provide fleets with more opportunities to minimise lead times on new vehicles.

He said: "For brand-agnostic customers, especially with commercials, we can look to fulfil orders with vehicles across the group that sit in the same segments."

The group's new fleet strategy will focus on growth in three areas: electric vans, electric and plug-in hybrid cars and the premium segments.

"We have a huge opportunity with electric light commercial vehicles (LCVs)," Taylor explained. "As a group we have an order bank that is bigger than the entire electric LCV market was in 2021."

Taylor expects Stellantis to be the largest true fleet group in the LCV market this year.

In the company car market, the group has already built a healthy share in the segments it operates in. Taylor said further growth will come from capitalising on the introduction of new plug-in hybrid models in the shorter term, and EVs in the lead up to 2030.

## EXPANDING LINE-UP

Before the end of 2022, Stellantis will expand its model line-up with the new Alfa Romeo Tonale SUV, Citroën C5 X, DS 4 and 9, and new Vauxhall Astra (see page 48). All will be offered with plug-in hybrid engines.

Stellantis outlined a £25 billion electrification strategy last summer, which includes switching Vauxhall to an EV-only brand by 2028.

The group has set a target for fully electric and plug-in hybrid cars to account for 70% of its European sales by 2030.

All future vehicles will be developed on one of four new platforms, which are said to provide a high level of flexibility, both in length and width, and component sharing.

Alongside the Small, Medium and Large car platforms will be one dedicated for commercial vehicles, such as vans and pick-ups.



#bornelectric

UK specification will vary. Fuel economy and CO<sub>2</sub> results for the BMW iX3. Mpg (l/100km): Not applicable. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 0 g/km. Electric range\*: 280 to 285 miles. These figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. The iX3 is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures.

\*These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

# THE iX3



Search:  
BMW iX3

**FleetNews**

# AWARDS 2022

# Finalists revealed

The people, companies and vehicles competing for the prestigious Fleet News Awards.

Join us at London's Grosvenor House Hotel to find out who takes the honours

## FLEET CATEGORIES

### EXCELLENCE IN FLEET SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE

sponsored by DriveTech

#### Finalists

- Balfour Beatty Plant & Fleet Services
- Kent and Essex Police
- Mitie
- Platform Housing Group
- Speedy Asset Services

### ENVIRONMENTAL FLEET TRAILBLAZER

sponsorship available

#### Finalists

- Centrica
- Coventry City Council
- London Borough of Islington
- Mitie
- National Grid
- Nottingham City Council
- Speedy Asset Services

### FLEET BENEFITS SCHEME OF THE YEAR

sponsorship available

#### Finalists

- Centrica
- Equans UK & Ireland
- Siemens
- Willmott Dixon

### MOST IMPROVED FLEET

sponsored by Kinto

#### Finalists

- J Murphy & Sons
- Marston Holdings

Sponsored by



- Platform Housing Group
- Speedy Asset Services
- The AA Driving School
- Vinci Fleet Services

### WELLBEING, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN FLEET

sponsored by Free2move Lease

#### Finalists

- Arval UK
- National Association of Police Fleet Managers
- National Grid

### FLEET OF THE YEAR – UP TO 250 VEHICLES

sponsorship available

#### Finalists

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- University of Birmingham

### FLEET OF THE YEAR – 251-1,000 VEHICLES

sponsored by Northgate Vehicle Hire

#### Finalists

- Eric Wright Group
- Oxford City Council
- Platform Housing Group

### FLEET OF THE YEAR – MORE THAN 1,000 VEHICLES

sponsorship available

#### Finalists

- J Murphy & Sons
- Kent and Essex Police
- Marston Holdings
- Mitie
- National Grid
- Siemens
- Speedy Asset Services

## VAN MANUFACTURERS

All van manufacturer categories sponsored by Rivanus

### BEST SMALL VAN

#### Finalists

- Citroën Berlingo
- Ford Transit Connect
- Peugeot Partner
- Toyota Proace City
- Vauxhall Combo
- Volkswagen Caddy Cargo

### BEST MEDIUM VAN

#### Finalists

- Citroën Dispatch
- Ford Transit Custom
- Peugeot Expert
- Toyota Proace
- Vauxhall Vivaro
- Volkswagen Transporter

### BEST LARGE VAN

#### Finalists

- Fiat Ducato
- Ford Transit
- Iveco Daily
- Mercedes-Benz Sprinter
- MAN TGE
- Volkswagen Crafter

### BEST ALL-TERRAIN WORKHORSE

#### Finalists

- Ford Ranger
- Isuzu D-Max
- Toyota Hilux
- Toyota Land Cruiser Commercial

## TRUCK MANUFACTURERS

All truck manufacturer categories sponsored by Rivanus

### BEST TWO-AXLE LIGHTWEIGHT RIGID TRUCK – UP TO 12 TONNES

#### Finalists

- Daf LF
- Fuso Canter
- Iveco Eurocargo
- MAN TGL
- Mercedes-Benz Atego

### BEST RIGID TRUCK – MORE THAN 12 TONNES

#### Finalists

- Daf CF
- MAN TGM
- Scania P Series
- Volvo FM

### BEST DIESEL TRACTOR UNIT

#### Finalists

- Daf XG+
- MAN TGX
- Mercedes-Benz Actros
- Scania S Series
- Volvo FH

## CAR MANUFACTURERS

All car manufacturer categories sponsored by Ogilvie Fleet

### BEST SMALL CAR

#### Finalists

- Hyundai i20
- Peugeot 208
- Renault Clio
- Škoda Fabia
- Toyota Yaris
- Vauxhall Corsa

## BEST LOWER MEDIUM CAR

### Finalists

- Citroën C4
- Peugeot 308
- Seat Leon
- Škoda Octavia
- Volkswagen Golf
- Volkswagen ID3

## BEST COMPACT SUV

### Finalists

- Cupra Formentor
- Ford Puma
- Hyundai Kona
- Mercedes-Benz EQA
- Peugeot 2008
- Toyota Yaris Cross
- Vauxhall Mokka

## BEST MID-SIZE SUV

### Finalists

- Ford Kuga
- Hyundai Tucson
- Toyota Rav4
- Vauxhall Grandland X
- Volkswagen Tiguan
- Volvo XC40

## BEST PREMIUM SUV

### Finalists

- BMW X3
- BMW iX3
- Lexus NX
- Mercedes-Benz EQC
- Volvo XC60

## BEST COMPACT PREMIUM CAR

### Finalists

- Audi A3
- BMW 1 Series
- Mercedes-Benz A-Class

## BEST PREMIUM CAR

### Finalists

- BMW 3 Series
- BMW i4
- Mercedes-Benz C-Class
- Polestar 2
- Tesla Model 3

## ALTERNATIVE FUELS

All alternative fuel categories sponsored by Zenith

## BEST ZERO EMISSION CAR – UP TO £40,000

### Finalists

- Hyundai Kona Electric
- Kia e-Niro
- MG 5 SW
- MG ZS EV
- Peugeot e-2008
- Peugeot e-208
- Volkswagen ID3

## BEST ZERO EMISSION CAR – MORE THAN £40,000

### Finalists

- Audi Q4 e-tron
- BMW i4
- Hyundai Ioniq 5
- Kia EV6
- Polestar 2
- Škoda Enyaq
- Tesla Model Y

## BEST ZERO EMISSION SMALL/MEDIUM VAN

### Finalists

- Citroën e-Berlingo
- Citroën e-Dispatch
- Peugeot e-Expert
- Peugeot e-Partner
- Toyota Proace City Electric
- Toyota Proace Electric
- Vauxhall Combo-e
- Vauxhall Vivaro-e

## BEST ZERO EMISSION LARGE VAN

### Finalists

- Fiat eDucato
- Maxus eDeliver 9
- Mercedes-Benz eSprinter

## BEST ALTERNATIVE FUEL TRUCK

### Finalists

- Iveco Stralis CNG
- Iveco Stralis LNG
- Scania G Series CNG
- Scania G Series LNG
- Volvo LNG

## MOST IMPROVED FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

sponsorship available

### Finalists

- Audi
- Hyundai
- MG
- Volvo

## SUPPLIER CATEGORIES

## LEASING COMPANY OF THE YEAR (UP TO 20,000 VEHICLES)

sponsored by Aston Barclay

### Finalists

- Ari
- Hexagon Leasing
- JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions
- Ogilvie Fleet
- The Grosvenor Group

## LEASING COMPANY OF THE YEAR (MORE THAN 20,000 VEHICLES)

sponsored by Jaama

### Finalists

- Free2move Lease
- Novuna Vehicle Solutions
- LeasePlan UK

- Volkswagen Financial Services
- Zenith Vehicle Contracts

## RENTAL COMPANY OF THE YEAR

sponsored by Grosvenor Contracts

### Finalists

- Enterprise
- Europcar Mobility Group UK
- Hexagon Leasing
- Northgate Vehicle Hire
- Reflex Vehicle Hire
- Thrifty Car and Van Rental

## OUTSTANDING PRODUCT OR SERVICE

sponsored by System Edström

### Finalists

- Engineius for its technology enabled service for all types of vehicle movement
- London Borough of Islington for its refurbished and repowered 'upcycled' twin pack refuse vehicle
- Mina Digital for its home charging fleet payment solution
- National Highways for its van driver toolkit
- Nexus Vehicle Rental for its Iris online rental platform
- Ogilvie Fleet for its EV database online tool
- VisionTrack for its Autonomise.ai a next-generation cloud-based Internet of Things (IoT) platform

## FLEET CUSTOMER PARTNERSHIP AWARD

sponsorship available

### Finalists

- Fleetmaster Operational Support Services and British Gas
- Fleet Service GB and Dynniq UK & Ireland
- Hexagon Leasing and Oak Furnitureland
- Novuna Vehicle Solutions and RAC
- Sopp+Sopp and Centrica
- Zenith Vehicle Contracts and Royal Mail Group

## FLEET DEALER OF THE YEAR

sponsored by Leasys

### Finalists

- Johnsons Fleet Services
- Lookers Vehicle Solutions
- TrustFord

## HEADLINE CATEGORIES

## FLEET SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

sponsorship available

### Finalists

- Fleet Assist
- FleetCheck
- FMG

- Nexus Vehicle Rental
- Rivus
- The AA
- Zenith Commercial

## FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR – CAR

All manufacturer categories sponsored by Egg

### Finalists

- Audi
- BMW
- Ford
- Kia
- Mercedes-Benz
- Polestar
- Tesla
- Volvo

## FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR – VAN

### Finalists

- Ford
- Maxus
- Mercedes-Benz
- Peugeot
- Renault
- Vauxhall
- Volkswagen

## FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR – TRUCK

### Finalists

- Daf
- MAN
- Mercedes-Benz Trucks
- Scania
- Volvo

## FLEET MANAGER OF THE YEAR

sponsored by Reflex Vehicle Hire

### Finalists

- Shaun Atton, Auto Windscreens
- Ian Summers, City Facilities Management
- Steve Openshaw, Eric Wright Group
- Tony Murphy, J Murphy & Sons
- John Gorton, Kent and Essex Police
- Lorna McAtear, National Grid
- Aaron Powell, Speedy Asset Services

## FLEET NEWS HALL OF FAME

sponsored by the AA

Editor's choice

For more information about the awards event, please visit [www.fleetnewsawards.com](http://www.fleetnewsawards.com)

# Hyundai's vision of the future

The South Korean manufacturer has revealed how it sees the future of mobility: it includes self-driving vehicles, autonomous furniture and walking robots. *Andrew Ryan reports*



**W**hen the word 'mobility' was first used a few years ago in relation to the future of transport, it usually referred to a number of revolutionary technologies, such as self-driving robotaxis and mobility-as-a-service (MaaS).

Over time, this meaning has been diluted and is now commonly used to describe a wide range of products including vehicles, as well as rental and funding methods.

Hyundai, however, unveiled its mobility of things concept at last month's CES show in Las Vegas and its vision is every bit as radical as the word mobility was originally intended to be.

It features some staple concepts of future mobility such as self-driving vehicles – both passenger and cargo – but also incorporates the ability for inanimate objects such as desks to move autonomously around buildings, as well as walking robots and other robotics technology.

Hyundai had already been taking a different approach towards future mobility with its urban air mobility division, which aims to launch an electric vertical take-off and landing vehicle (eVTOL) in 2028 (see panel, p21).

"It's natural for us as a smart mobility provider to think about robotics as technology evolves," says Euisun Chung, executive chair of Hyundai Motor Group.

"That's why all our mobility devices and

services include robot functionality: mobility and robotics work and play well together.

"Mobility technology will accelerate robotics technology and vice versa."

The more traditional future mobility technologies announced by Hyundai at CES were for autonomous vehicles and revolved around the development of its Plug & Drive (PnD) and Drive & Lift (DnL) modular platforms.

The PnD platform is a single-wheel unit which combines steering, braking, in-wheel electric drive and suspension.

Lidar and camera sensors will allow a PnD-enabled object to move autonomously.

For personal mobility this means four could be attached to a pod large enough to carry one person which Hyundai says would provide a comfortable experience while protecting personal privacy. This could dock with a larger vehicle for longer distances.

"Imagine travelling in your personal mobility cabin from the airport to your home," says Dong Jin Hyun, vice-president and head of robotics at Hyundai Lab.

"The pod is attached to a larger motor shuttle for most of the journey,

but for the last mile to your home, the pod is detached and goes directly to your front door."

A similar set-up could be used for logistics, with the smaller pods being used for the last-mile delivery of goods.

## AUTONOMOUS LUGGAGE

Hyundai also visualises the PnD modules can be used in other applications, such as for autonomously moving luggage around in hotels, as well as being attached to usually inanimate objects.

"We can add mobility to anything just by attaching PnD modules," says Hyun.

"From small tables to larger containers, PnD makes mobility extremely expandable: customers can select various drive configurations and platform sizes based on their requirements.

"It's this ability that makes configuring spaces on demand possible. This includes living spaces, workplaces and even retail areas.

"Consider the example of businesses sharing office space: different businesses may need to change the office layout to suit them: the use of PnD can move the fixtures and furniture for them."

"In the world to come, you won't move your things, they will move around you. It's this ability that makes configuring spaces on demand possible."

The DnL module is smaller and is intended for micromobility solutions. Used as part of Hyundai's mobile eccentric droid (MobED) it can drive up and down stairs as well as other uneven surfaces.

At CES, Hyundai also announced how it will build on its mobility technologies by integrating robotics to create an "unlimited mobility of things".

Atlas was initially designed by Boston Dynamics for search and rescue



The cities of the future may have automated vehicles going to central points before individual pods are off-loaded for last-mile drops

## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

**By Gavin Franks, Business Services**

**Director at the AA**



Over the past 12 months I've talked a lot about innovation on the road to 2030 and electrification. Innovation in terms of technology and driver support is critical on this journey, but a key influencing factor is evolving customer expectations.

While the automotive landscape is evolving rapidly with the transition to alternative fuels, so, too, are the expectations of customers and drivers.

The pandemic accelerated many trends, such as the rise in online retailing and home delivery, and we mustn't overlook the influence they are having on reshaping society as we move forwards.

We've explored the landscape in our latest yellow paper *Customer experience and innovation: the new world order*. The paper delves into digital and customer experience trends and how they're impacting businesses and their fleets.

Importantly, there are many opportunities these trends offer fleets. The demand from consumers to have goods and services available at locations to suit them, such as at home, can help save fleets time.

Innovation is going to continue to be critical for businesses moving forward and for us all to reach our net zero goals. We've seen this with the introduction of our award-winning Freewheeling Hub, a game-changing addition to our Multi-Fit Wheel kit. It's making a real difference to the breakdown process for drivers. But the customer experience is what's going to change the pace of our journey to 2030 and we're with you to meet the needs of drivers every step of the way."

You can read the AA's latest yellow paper here: <https://bit.ly/3Bsavdb>

**For all enquiries, please visit our website**  
- [www.theaa.com/business](http://www.theaa.com/business) or call us on  
**0800 55 11 88**



These ambitions were shown last June when Hyundai bought American robotics company Boston Dynamics for \$1.1bn (£81,000,000). This company is best known for its Spot four-legged robot, with several hundred in operation around the globe. Next year, it intends to launch Stretch, a logistics robot for the warehouse, while Atlas is a two-legged humanoid robot with human-level agility. It is 1.5m tall (4ft 9in), weighs 80kg (12.6st) and can lift about 11kg (just more than 1.7st).

### INTELLIGENT ROBOTS

"Right now, most of the robots used in factories are doing very repetitive, very specific, precision-oriented jobs," says Marc Raibert, founder and chairman of Boston Dynamics.

"That's not what we see in the future. We see a future where robots become much more intelligent, much more useful, really contribute to productivity and safety, and in which people and machines work together to improve the quality of life."

"To achieve that vision of companion robots, we're going to have to create technology which we call athletic intelligence, like the technology that's in Spot the robot, Stretch and Atlas."

"That's the ability to balance, to climb stairs, to move in any kind of terrain. It's also the ability to



Spot is a nimble, four-legged robot from Boston Dynamics

use dexterous manipulation to handle objects and also achieve situational awareness, which means using sensors to understand what is happening around you."

"Once you have all that it means that robots can be

used in places not only where people operate, even though that has been a big goal, but also in places where people really shouldn't operate: think of Fukushima or Chernobyl."

"Right now we have two Spot robots at Chernobyl outfitted with radiation sensors and they can be used to map the level of radiation without having people go into those spaces."

"We're really excited because that's an example of providing safety for humans and expanding the envelope of what robots can do."

Hyundai is also exploring the idea of wearable robots. "These are human exoskeletons," adds Raibert. "Imagine a worker who's doing a repetitive task that's rough on the body. There are many of those tasks out there in industry."

"The robot can absorb some of that load or, even in some cases, make the wearer into a superhuman that can lift very heavy loads beyond what a normal person could do."



# The AA looks ahead with customer experience front and centre

**The new year is always a time for reflection and goal-setting, but perhaps never more so than following the challenging couple of years businesses have faced. Looking ahead, and with the target of net zero by 2030 in mind, customer experience and innovation are going to be key themes for the fleet sector – as they will be across the wider business landscape. Here, Gavin Franks (right), business services director at the AA, shares his thoughts on how this will impact businesses and the opportunities ahead.**

**C**ustomer experience and innovation are two areas where we've seen some of the most significant examples of opportunity reshaping the landscape. When the pandemic hit, many businesses adapted quickly to survive and we saw them thrive. These adaptations came about from the changes in society, which, ultimately, impacted consumer expectations.

Central to this changing landscape is the acceleration of online retailing. The Ofcom report 'Online Nation 2021' revealed how the pandemic has sped up the digital shift.

Over the past couple of years, UK adults spent an average of three hours and 47 minutes online every day, with online shopping sales rising 48% to £113bn.



While, understandably, our reliance on online shopping went up when we couldn't leave home, it shifted consumer expectations and, even after lockdowns have lifted, many changes in attitudes and behaviour are here to stay.

We're seeing a change in consumer demand for more convenience, control and the availability of goods and services at times and locations that suit.

For fleets, drivers are expecting the same. We know fleet managers are feeling this, as our research report 'New Horizons', revealed that there's a clear trend for personalisation of experiences and flexibility, such as home delivery and



one point of contact. We found that 85% expect a service which is tailored to their organisation's own needs and 83% expect a service that matches the agility and flexibility that an individual consumer would expect.

With less than a decade for fleets to prepare for the Government's date for net zero emissions from new cars, we're also working to help make the transition as easy as possible for fleet managers and drivers.

The driver experience is central to this, and we're proud of our innovative charge post customer support service. Today, we work with seven providers, supporting more than 7,000 charge posts.

This means drivers can be confident they will get support at a charge post if they have any technical difficulties and can get back on their journey as quickly as possible.

It's only through better understanding of evolving customer expectations that we'll continue to meet high customer and driver satisfaction levels and innovation is critical to this. With, hopefully, a more settled period ahead, 2022 is going to offer further opportunities for businesses and fleets to adapt, evolve and enhance their operations for the future and the AA is no exception.

With customers at our heart, we're at the forefront of support for the transition to a greener, brighter future.



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## TOMORROW'S FLEET: ROBOTIC ADVANCES



### C METAMOBILITY CONCEPT

Hyundai also revealed its new concept of metamobility, with the goal of creating a smart-device-to-metaverse connection that will expand the role of mobility to virtual reality.

The metaverse is a new term coined to cover a combination of technologies, including virtual reality, augmented reality and video, where users interact within a digital universe.

Hyundai intends to take this a step further by linking the digital technologies to an actual smart device or robot, meaning that a user can physically operate a device thousands of miles away through the digital interface.

"This was technically not possible until now," says Chang Song, president and head of transportation as a service at Hyundai Motor Company.

"In the future metaverse, with the advancement of sensors, actuators, artificial intelligence, software and hardware, we will be able to control and guide companion robots as if we were actually there."

"Imagine you are a facilities engineer for a global company like Hyundai with manufacturing plants around the world."

"Every repair usually involves a trip: you and your team of engineers have to fly around the world to make on-site inspections and repairs. But if you have a companion robot there, you could do that through the metaverse without having to travel."

"The internet is big. It lets you touch all of the knowledge in the world. But the metaverse, plus the internet, plus robotics is even bigger."

"Because not only can you touch all the data in the world, you can touch all the physical things and manipulate them wherever you are."



### SUPERNAL LAUNCHED TO TRANSFORM URBAN TRANSPORT

Hyundai Motor Group has created a new company called Supernal as an evolution of its urban air mobility division.

Supernal will develop a family of electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and plans to launch its first commercial flight in 2028, scaling operations in the 2030s.

"We have bold ambitions at Supernal, but being first to market is not one of them," says Jaiwon Shin, CEO of Supernal and president of Hyundai Motor Group.

"We are working to build the right product and the right integrated market, and we will leverage Hyundai Motor Group's scaled manufacturing expertise to ensure the emerging advanced air mobility industry

reaches the right price point and is accessible to the masses."

Last month, British start-up Urban-Air Port (UAP) secured a significant new investment from Supernal to deliver essential ground infrastructure that will enable mass adoption of cargo drones and air taxis, transforming the way goods and people are transported around urban areas. The partnership will support UAP's plans to develop 200 vertiports across the world in the next five years.

The world's first vertiport, Air-One, will open in April in Coventry city centre to show the potential of advanced air mobility to reduce congestion, cut air pollution and decarbonise transport.



# 2022'S TOP AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESS TRENDS

# 2022

**Major changes? Maybe not, but certainly expect 2021 motoring trends to continue throughout this year, says Pedro Pacheco, senior research director at Gartner**

ISTOCK/BURATDENIZ

The year 2022 promises to be a bustling period for the automotive industry. The sector has long embarked on a full-on transformation that promises to leave no stone unturned and this year will see a continuation of this disruptive path.

Major changes do not happen from one year to another and, for that reason, it should be no surprise that some of this year's main automotive trends are a continuation from last year.

## REGULAR AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE SERVICES START, CHALLENGES TO FOLLOW

The new autonomous vehicle (AV) regulation to be enforced in Germany from this year is a major step forward for Level 4 autonomy.

Roboshuttles will be allowed to operate as regular services on public roads as this is the first time a whole country permits some sort of regular (non-conditioned to trial or pilot) AV service within its whole territory.

For that matter, it unlocks tremendous opportunity for AV technology: in total, more than 50 roboshuttle services are slated to operate in Germany within this year.

As such, the eyes of the AV world will be looking critically at what's happening in that country.

This great breakthrough is also a moment of truth for AVs.

On one hand, it allows a much faster and broader proliferation of the technology. On the other, it doesn't test or directly regulate the safety performance of vehicles. As such, there is still a considerable risk for accidents.

These may lead to a critical point when regulators need to decide what to do after an accident happens.

Independent of what the outcome will be, precious



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pedro Pacheco is a senior research director in Gartner's CIO Research group. He covers the automotive industry with a focus on connected car, autonomous drive and electric drive, while his expertise also encompasses smart mobility.

lessons will be learned on the long road towards the widespread adoption of Level 4/5 AV tech.

## HOPES FOR HYDROGEN DOMINANCE IN ROAD VEHICLES WILL FADE

This year will bring much greater clarity on the race between battery electric vehicle (BEV) and hydrogen in the area of road vehicles.

As the main hydrogen advocates among automakers are now making major investments in BEVs, they don't have enough resources to make similar bets on hydrogen, which will lead to a lack of competitive hydrogen-powered passenger

**“ IF RIDE-HAILING HAS PROVED TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MODEL, EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE CAN BE SAID ABOUT CAR-SHARING ”**

cars on the market in comparison with BEVs.

The situation will not be so black and white in what comes to heavy-duty vehicles.

However, as the hydrogen refuelling infrastructure struggles to build scale, partnerships between truck makers like Volvo, Daimler and Scania to boost charging infrastructure are a key sign that BEV may also top hydrogen in trucks.

The rollout of the new MCS (megawatt charging system) standard for heavy duty vehicles also promises to heavily slash charging times.

In short, 2022 is not the end of hydrogen for road vehicles – not at all. However, it will become clear that its chances of building a visible market penetration in relation to BEVs are minimal.

## CAR-AS-A-SERVICE MODELS TO PROGRESSIVELY MERGE

During the past decade we have seen a proliferation of car-as-a-service (CaaS) models like ride-hailing and car-sharing, in addition to the traditional rental and leasing.

If ride-hailing has proved to be a successful model, exactly the opposite can be said about car-sharing in most situations.

The rental model has also suffered heavily with the pandemic and some players arising from the ashes are now in a position to try fresh approaches.

As such, these factors open the door to a progressive merge of CaaS models, focusing on greater customer centricity and much greater utilisation of the fleet.

Whether a customer needs a car for an hour, a day, a month or a year, the needs and the model have a lot in common.

Leading players in personal mobility will realise this and will progressively move in this direction.

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# THE HARD CELL

Soaring demand for EV batteries is bringing challenges around cost, scarcity of raw materials and sustainability, but these are being overcome. *Andrew Ryan* reports

**T**he costs associated with electric vehicles (EVs) are on something of a roller coaster ride at the moment.

Despite the uptake of the technology being a key part of the Government's transport decarbonisation strategy, in December it cut incentives by slashing the plug-in car grant and changing the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Some carmakers responded by reducing the sale price of their battery electric vehicles (BEVs) so they still qualified, a move enabled, in part, by the cost of producing batteries – which account for around 40% of the cost of manufacturing a BEV – falling to a record low.

However, soaring natural gas prices have seen the price of electricity rise as the fossil fuel is used to generate 40% of the UK's electricity, while many experts predict the cost of batteries will rise in 2022.

"We've got an ever-increasing reliance upon elements such as nickel, cobalt, lithium, manganese and copper for EV batteries," says James Nicholson, partner in advanced manufacturing and mobility at EY.

"For a while now, a lot of those commodities have had suppressed prices and there's a strong chance that, as demand goes up and these metals become quite scarce, we will see some of those material prices continue to lift."

"That's going to put a pinch point on the cost of the materials that go into battery cells and that could lift the price to the carmaker and, eventually, the consumer."

Figures from Bloomberg New Energy Finance show the inflation-adjusted price of battery packs for cars was \$1,200 (£885) per kWh in 2010. This had fallen to \$132 (£97) last year.

The impact this has on the cost of producing an EV is significant. Assuming a kWh price of \$132, it would have cost \$6,000 (£4,425) to produce a 50kWh battery last year. In 2010, this would have been \$60,000 (£44,247).

However, prices of many of the elements used in EV battery production rose sharply in the second half of 2021: for example, battery-grade lithium carbonate rose to a record high of \$41,060 (£30,280) per tonne, more than five times higher than last January, cobalt doubled to \$70,208, (£51,775) while nickel jumped 15% to \$20,045 (£14,782) a tonne.

#### TOUGH ENVIRONMENT

"This creates a tough environment for automakers, particularly those in Europe, which have to increase EV sales in order to meet average fleet emissions standards," says James Frith, head of energy storage research at Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

"These automakers may now have a choice between reducing their margins or passing costs on, at the risk of putting consumers off purchasing an EV."

Factors behind the rise in costs include the investment needed in new mining and processing facilities to produce greater quantities of the materials, as well as soaring demand.

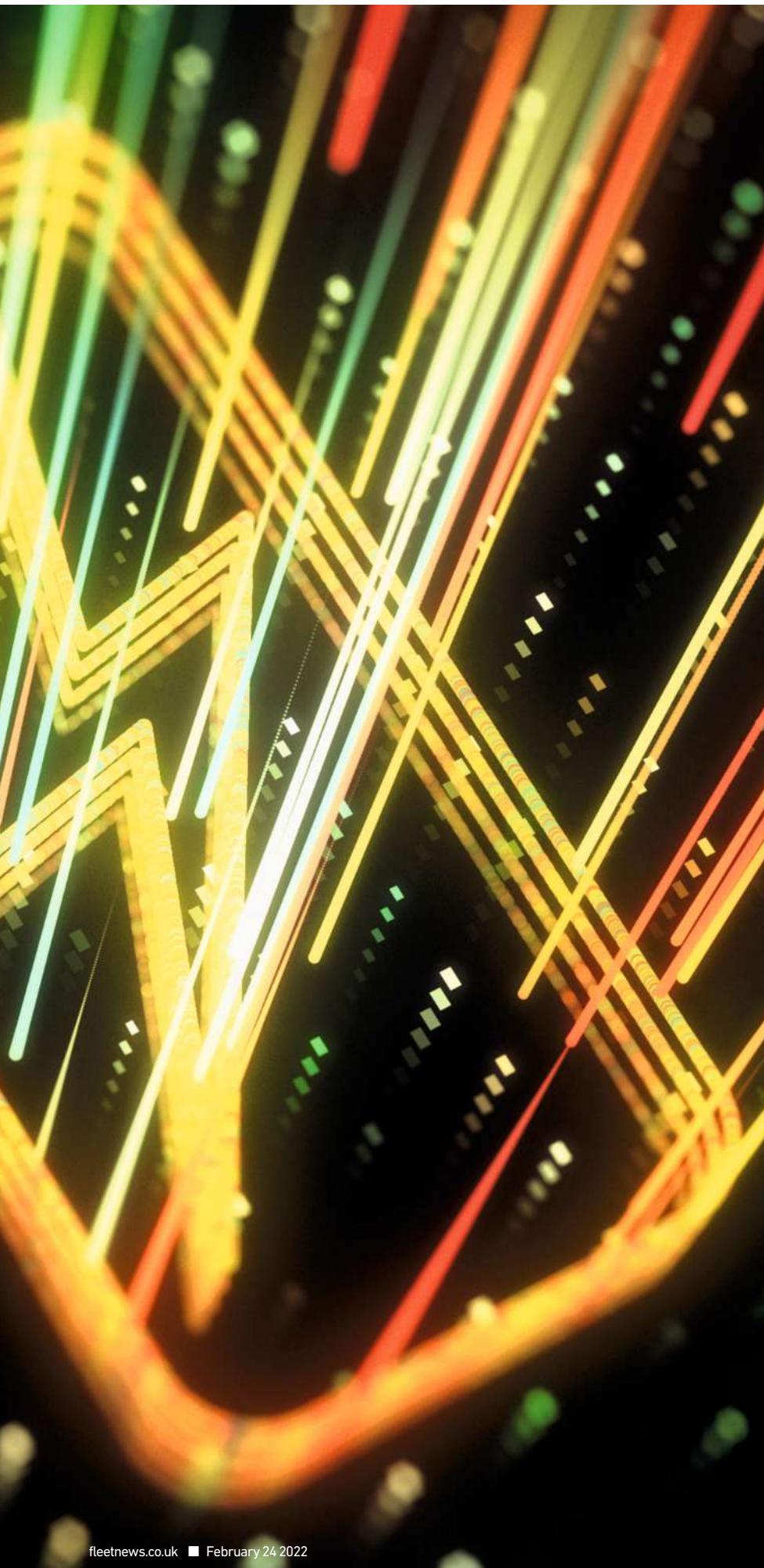
According to S&P Global Market Intelligence, lithium carbonate equivalent supply is forecast to increase from 497,000 tonnes last year to 636,000 tonnes in 2022. Demand, however, is expected to hit 641,000 tonnes.

"We're entering a new era in terms of lithium pricing over the next few years because the demand will be so strong," adds Gavin Montgomery, research director for battery raw materials at Wood McKenzie.

The need to reduce the cost of batteries is one of the driving forces behind research. One option to achieve this is to change the chemistry of the batteries to use cheaper, more common metals.

For example, cobalt can be replaced by nickel, which is cheaper and holds more energy. However, cobalt's advantage is that it doesn't overheat or catch fire easily.

"The real breakthrough research will be to



## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

**By Rob Morris, head of fleet and remarketing, Volvo Car UK**

In 2021, Volvo Car UK recorded growth of nearly 5% year-on-year (YOY) for new car sales volume and a 3% YOY increase in market share. The team is busy planning for some exciting new changes in 2022.

We've opened our first pure electric test drive hub in partnership with the Eden Project. This has been well received by consumers eager to try our electric offering.

More recently we also announced that we now offer free windscreens and tyre repairs to all our customers.

Interest in our electrified product continues to grow at pace among fleet and business customers. Last year, nearly two-thirds of our true fleet registrations were plug-in hybrid and this year we have moved to expand our pure electric offering with the launch of the C40 Recharge – our pure electric crossover with Google built-in.

The C40 joins the already established XC40 Recharge and, by 2030, Volvo Cars aims to become an electric-only car manufacturer.

Earlier this month – and in line with our global digitalisation strategy – we launched an online direct sales platform for our used car offer, the only place to buy a used electric Volvo. Our first customers to the platform have already completed the online process to buy their used EV.

Finally, we are delighted to have been shortlisted in four categories, including Fleet Manufacturer of the Year, at the upcoming Fleet News Awards and we look forward to seeing our friends and colleagues from the fleet industry on March 16 in London.

**For more details on how Volvo can assist you and your business please call us on 0345 600 4027 or visit [volvocars.co.uk/business](http://volvocars.co.uk/business)**



"keep the cost down and retain the resilience of the supply chain at the same time," says Pam Thomas, CEO of battery research programme The Faraday Institution, which oversees a consortium of more than 20 UK universities and 50 businesses.

"So it's quite a conundrum. You may find that you have different batteries in different cars: high-performance cars like McLarens will use different batteries compared with city cars. We've got to get the right battery in the right application."

When news breaks of new battery technology developments, the focus is, understandably, usually on the amount of charge a battery can hold as well as its charging time, as these are the issues which affect fleets and drivers now.

Last month, it was announced that a team from the University of Michigan has developed a biologically-inspired membrane that could quintuple the charge capacity of electric car batteries (see panel on p29).

#### SELF-HEALING BATTERIES

Another recent announcement has come from Israeli battery technology company StoreDot, which revealed patented technology that will allow battery cells to regenerate while they are in use.

This self-healing system includes a suite of software algorithms which can identify cells or strings of cells that are underperforming or overheating, temporarily disabling them in order to proactively recondition them back to 100% without the driver experiencing any loss of performance.

StoreDot says this technology will play a major



role in prolonging battery life and driving range, as well as improving safety by helping to prevent overheating.

The 'self-healing' technology sits alongside the company's developments of extreme fast charging lithium-ion batteries. It expects to deliver units which provide a 50% reduction in charging time at the same cost as current batteries by 2024.

StoreDot is also working on lithium-ion batteries which can charge in five minutes, as well as its next-generation solid state batteries, with planned mass production in 2028.

However, increasing focus is being placed on lower-cost technologies using less rare metals.

One solution being considered by car manufacturers is to use low-cost lithium-iron-phosphate (known as LFP) chemistry as the cathode material.

These batteries are significantly cheaper than the industry-standard lithium-ion, do not require any nickel or cobalt, and are more stable, which makes them safer.

However, the cells are less energy dense which means they offer lower range for the same weight as other cells. Cold conditions also affect them more.

In October, Tesla announced it would use LFP chemistry in its standard-range BEVs rather than nickel-cobalt-aluminium which it will continue to use in its longer-range cars. In its Model 3, LFP will result in a small reduction in range, dropping from 263 miles to 253.

The move has been considered as a way for Tesla to increase profit margins on its cars without having to raise retail prices.

It is already making cars with LFP batteries in

Shanghai and sells those in China, the Asia-Pacific region and Europe.

Ford and Volkswagen have also expressed interest in the technology for lower-priced models, according to Guidehouse Insights.

Other manufacturers will no doubt follow: Toyota is sourcing LFP technology from Chinese carmaker BYD Auto to use in a fully-electric small car due to be launched in China this year.

#### UK PROJECTS

Significant research and investment in battery technologies is also taking place in the UK: £10m of Faraday Battery Challenge funding is being used to build a better British battery industry.

The projects include a consortium led by LiNa Energy that will develop a new sodium nickel chloride battery system, leading to improved cell performance, and manufacturing optimised for scale-up, decarbonisation and recycling.

Another, led by Anaphite, aims to develop faster charging batteries by incorporating graphene into the battery cathode.

Funding from the Faraday Battery Challenge also helped in the opening of the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC) in Coventry last year.

The centre has been developed to support UK industry with the development of battery technologies for future electrification.

As well as cost and performance, the question of sustainability is also taking centre stage with new battery technologies.

There has been much talk that BEV batteries can be given a second life in functions such as grid storage when they are no longer suitable for use in vehicles, but there will also be a

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Fuel consumption and emissions for the Volvo C40 Recharge: WLTP electric energy consumption 2.8 – 3.0 miles/kWh. Equivalent all electric range 257.9 – 273.4 miles. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare equivalent electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. The Volvo C40 Recharge requires mains electricity for charging. These figures may not reflect real-life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Preliminary data. Model Year 2022 C40 imagery for illustration purposes only.

# END-TO-END EV EXPERTISE

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point where they degrade too much to be useful in this application as well.

"It's clear that one should only be investigating and researching new technologies where the recycling at end-of-life can be achieved in a green way," says Thomas.

"It's not green recycling just to shred the batteries into black powder and then send that to be incinerated or buried in China, which is currently what the industry is doing."

"We have a finite supply of materials in the world and, therefore, we should be doing our utmost to recover these precious elements at a battery's end of life."

#### COMPLICATED PROCESS

However, the process is a complicated one, says Thomas. "Batteries do not end life in the same state as they started it," she adds.

"If all we had to do was dismantle a pristine battery, that might be something that would be a very surmountable problem."

"But these end-of-life batteries will actually have been abused in terms of maybe being driven beyond their recommended life or treated in ways by the average motorist that are not exactly the optimum way of treating the battery according to the technical guides."

"Every battery is a new case in terms of recycling. A project for researchers is around how the whole lifecycle of a battery can be monitored. The data collected will tell the end-of-life recycler what that battery had gone through and will inform them how that particular unit can be safely taken apart and the elements recovered."

Resource management company Veolia last month announced plans to build its first battery recycling facility in the UK, which, it says, will have the capacity to process 20% of the UK's end-of-life EV batteries by 2025.

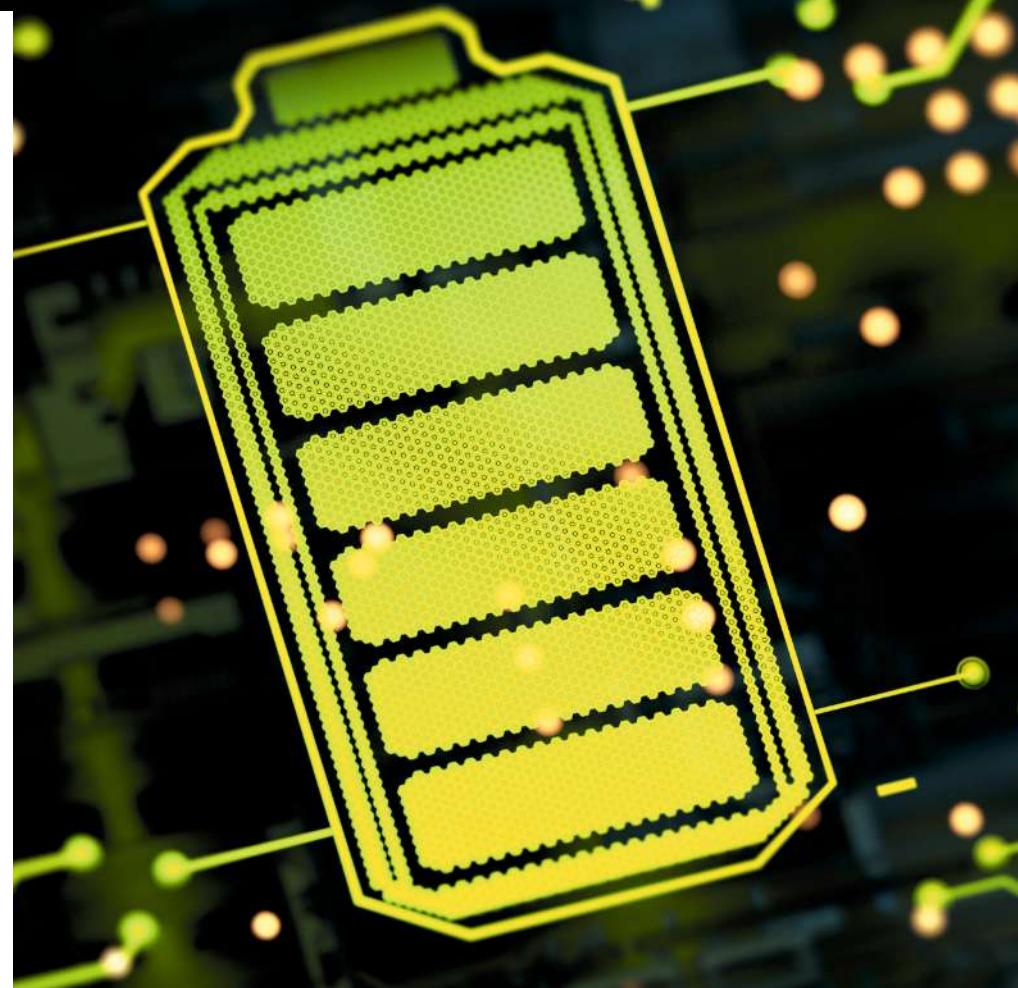
Veolia anticipates there will be an estimated 350,000 tonnes of end-of-life EV batteries in the country by 2040.

The plant, in Minworth, West Midlands (just north-east of Birmingham), will initially discharge and dismantle batteries before the mechanical and chemical separation recycling processes will be completed.

One positive for researchers looking into how EV batteries can be effectively recycled is that the need to find a solution is not as pressing as that to develop future battery technologies.

"We've got a little bit of time on our side," says Nicholson. "The reality is there are not enough batteries that have been into a car, been through their useful first life and come out again to support recycling plants on an economically viable basis."

"That's useful because we need the technology to mature a little bit."



#### QUINTUPLE-CHARGE BATTERIES NOT WITHOUT DRAWBACKS

Scientists from the University of Michigan have developed a biologically-inspired membrane that could quintuple the charge capacity of electric car batteries, significantly increasing their range.

Lithium-sulphur battery technology is seen as a potential future chemistry for vehicle batteries as they are capable of holding up to five times as much charge as the industry-standard lithium-ion cells.

However, the cathodes used in them is inherently unstable as they undergo a 78% change in size each charge cycle, meaning they are impractical for use in consumer electronics. The flaw also makes them degrade extremely quickly, meaning they would need to be replaced far more often than lithium-ion batteries.

But a solution is coming.

"There are a number of reports claiming several hundred cycles for lithium-sulphur batteries, but it is achieved at the expense of other parameters: capacity, charging rate, resilience and safety," says Nicholas Kotov, a

professor of chemical sciences and engineering at the university, who led the research.

"The challenge is to make a battery that increases the cycling rate from the former 10 cycles to hundreds of cycles and satisfies multiple other requirements, including cost."

The scientists used recycled Kevlar – the same material found in bullet-proof vests – to create a network of nanofibres similar to a cell membrane.

This fixed many of the fundamental issues with the degradation and instability of lithium-sulphur batteries. Kotov describes the new design as "nearly perfect", allowing the capacity and efficiency to approach the theoretical limits of lithium-sulphur batteries.

The anticipated lifespan of 1,000 cycles would mean the average car battery would need to be replaced roughly every 10 years.

Also, the materials used in production are far more abundant and less environmentally damaging than those used in lithium-ion batteries.



This 1908 map was published by the District Railway to highlight their services.

At the time this map was published District Railway trains ran to Hounslow; on the route now covered by the Piccadilly line.

Find out more at [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)

## DISTRICT RAILWAY



MUSEUM OF LONDON

LONDON UNDERGROUND HISTORY



# Underground movement relies on 800-strong vehicle fleet

As a former traffic cop, Tim Dawes, who now works in driver safety at Transport for London, is all too aware of dangers on the road. *Mike Roberts* reports

Maintaining the vast London Underground network of 270 stations and 250 miles of track requires a host of Transport for London (TfL) departments working together as part of a huge logistical operation.

One of those departments is West London-based Vehicle Logistics, which provides hundreds of vehicles to take engineers and other skilled workers and equipment to jobs at different stations throughout the capital, mostly throughout the night when the sites are closed to the public.

The 800-strong fleet is predominantly made up of vans, but also includes 20 heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), a small number of cars and around 10 fire engine-type vehicles which respond to emergencies or train breakdowns. For example, they were among the first responders to the Croydon tram crash in November 2016, in which seven people died and more than 60 were injured.

The fleet is used to maintain TfL's infrastructure, including the London Underground, trams, overground lines and the Elizabeth Line, due to open later this year.

Its refuse collection trucks play a vital role, as fleet compliance manager Tim Dawes explains: "Collecting rubbish from every station is a vitally important job. If we don't collect it on time, then it becomes a fire hazard and stations can be shut down."

Other HGVs within the fleet are used to transport large underground train-related items, such as wheel sets that require workshop attention.

HGVs are bought outright and vans are leased from three different suppliers and run for five years. The network has around 4,000 staff who are authorised to drive a vehicle and it's unlikely the workforce will travel any more than 20 miles in any given night, so mileage is kept low.

Most incidents requiring the compliance team's attention involve speeding. Telematics analysis found that on many occasions it was because drivers were caught out by new,

lower speed limits they were unaware of.

It's for this reason that the team is having speed limiters installed in a big chunk of its fleet. As Dawes explains: "We're retrofitting intelligent speed assistance, provided by a company called Sturdy, to 360 of the vehicles. It's a GPS-based system which limits the vehicles to the road's speed limit.

"A lot of the London area is now limited to 20mph. Telematics data showed that many speeding incidents involved drivers travelling around 32mph, so it was clear they were trying to stick to a 30mph limit when, in fact, they were in a 20mph limit."

The system has an override function should a driver need to intervene, perhaps if a map used by the GPS hasn't been fully updated.

Telematics data is analysed every Monday morning to identify any incidents the previous week. Persistent speeders are likely to be the first to be allocated vehicles with a limiter installed.

## DRIVER REACTION

Response from drivers is mixed, but Dawes insists it's there to help them avoid racking up speeding points and losing their licence.

He says: "We had an issue recently where the Paddington flyover was switched from a 40-mile-an-hour limit to a 30 miles an hour. One of our drivers was unaware of this and unfortunately over consecutive nights he got a series of speeding tickets. One of these vehicles would have helped him avoid that, and he wished he'd had one."

So far, 330 of the 360 initial vehicles have been fitted with the systems and, funding permitting, Dawes would like to extend it to the rest of the fleet.

Vehicle idling is another area flagged up by telematics, but Dawes would rather get to the source of the problem than come down hard on drivers.

"A lot of our operations are at night when the tube power is off," he says, "so we found that vehicles idle in the winter because crew members want to keep warm. In those ☺"

**Tim Dawes at the entrance to the Acton Town station on London's District Line. The vehicles he oversees play an important role in keeping stations open**

**COMPANY:** London Underground  
**DEPARTMENT:** Vehicle Logistics  
**FLEET COMPLIANCE MANAGER:**  
**Tim Dawes**  
**FLEET SIZE:** 800 vehicles, majority vans but also cars and HGVs. All used to help maintain the London Underground infrastructure  
**FUNDING:** HGVs outright purchased, vans and cars leased



Keeping people safe is the driving force behind Tim Dawes's role at TfL

C situations, we've fitted heaters in the vehicles. It helps the workforce and the environment."

Telematics also helps with vehicle utilisation, ensuring each is used to its maximum potential.

The company operates two systems, NavMan on its van fleet and Masternaut on HGVs, and uses a Microsoft BI power tool developed by its in-house Technology and Data team to merge the data streams.

Data is shared with department managers to show how their drivers fare when compared with other teams.

All drivers undergo an online risk assessment before being authorised to drive a vehicle. Those identified as high risk have an assessment with an Institute of Advanced Motorists driver, as do persistent offenders.

HGV drivers undergo regular assessments.

The vehicles are fitted with a RFID (radio frequency identification) immobiliser that requires a driver to tap a card on the dashboard before it will start, allowing the team to identify who was driving at any given time.

Based at TfL's Vehicle Logistic site in Acton, Dawes has been in his role for almost 10 years.

His passion for road safety may be borne from a previous career as a Metropolitan Police officer, latterly working as a detective in the Barnet area after a spell as a traffic officer based at Heathrow.

When we meet in west London, Dawes remembers fondly an encounter with one of the biggest stars from the musical arena.

"I stopped George Michael driving the wrong

way down a one-way street around that corner," he reminisces. "He was very good about it."

His approach of having a friendly word with the late singer is one he still takes with drivers today. His motives are genuine: he simply wants to keep them safe on the road.

"We're not out to punish our drivers; we try and solve problems they may have. Good engineers are hard to recruit and, subsequently, keep, so we want to educate them around driving and encourage good driving, not penalise them."

After leaving school, Dawes spent six years in the Royal Navy before joining the police.

He first came across his current workplace as a police officer – the site was part of his rounds and he would often pop into the

# DAWES ON...



Blast from the past – Tim Dawes in his days as a London traffic cop in the mid 1980s

offices for a cup of tea and a chat with staff.

On retiring from the force, he became a driving instructor when someone he knew told him about the London Underground compliance role vacancy.

"Although I'd not worked in fleet before, when I was a driving instructor I also worked for the insurance industry on reducing collisions. Despite having no fleet training, I think my life experience made me a suitable candidate."

Dawes's approach to driver safety is in keeping with TfL's own commitments as part of its Vision Zero Action Plan. In 2019, it published plans to reduce speed limits on almost all TfL roads in Westminster to 20mph.

And, in March 2020, TfL introduced a 20mph speed limit on all of its roads within the central

## ... post-crash analysis

Forward-facing cameras are fitted in all vehicles and Dawes closely scrutinises footage of incidents involving a third party as part of his post-crash analysis.

Even in cases where the TfL driver is not to blame, Dawes will offer advice, explaining how their driving style could possibly have prevented the incident happening.

"I'll tell the driver 'if you'd have just eased off the gas for one second, that accident wouldn't have happened'. It's not their fault that it did happen, but the other vehicle didn't come out of thin air," he says.

How do the drivers react to such advice?

"People hate having their driving criticised, so you have to be diplomatic. But it's a conversation I will continue having," he says.

Dawes is clearly passionate about keeping his drivers and other road users safe.

"I care about our collision rates. There used to be a culture of 'oh, I've crashed my van, can I have another one, please' and we were more of an accident collision processing centre. It's no longer like that."

Dawes says there were 680 collisions involving drivers when he started in 2012; last year there were 260.

“I STOPPED GEORGE MICHAEL DRIVING THE WRONG WAY DOWN A ONE-WAY STREET. HE WAS VERY GOOD ABOUT IT”

TIM DAWES, TfL

London congestion charging zone as part of its Vision Zero commitment to eliminate death and serious injury on London's roads. This included a new 20mph limit on Victoria Embankment and along the Millbank.

Speed is a factor in around 37% of collisions in London where a person dies or is seriously injured, according to TfL.

Dawes also points to a company policy which states that drivers must not be distracted when using a company wheel, using a mobile phone or eating, for example.

"As a traffic officer I was nearly knocked off my motorcycle by a taxi driver who had a coffee in one hand and a pie in the other," Dawes says, "so I'm all too aware of the dangers."

# Late Arrival, but now the innovative maker is ready to put its foot down

Collaboration with UPS has been critical in development of electric vans. *Stephen Briers reports*



Two of the team helping to drive Arrival forward – James Broomer, left, and Patrick Bion

**COMPANY:** Arrival  
**LAUNCHED:** 2015

**HEAD OFFICE/R&D:** Banbury, Oxfordshire

**UK MICROFACTORY:** Bicester, Oxfordshire

**VICE-PRESIDENT OF PRODUCT:** Patrick Bion

**HEAD OF PRODUCT – VAN:** James Broomer

**R**ewind to 2017. An enthusiastic Royal Mail pulls the wraps off a new electric vehicle weighing in at 7.5 tonnes which, it claims, will transform its business over the following few years.

However, amid ongoing fanfare and promises, large-scale production by the newcomer vehicle manufacturer failed to materialise; that is, until now.

The company, of course, is Arrival, the 2015 start-up electric vehicle (EV) specialist which has bold ambitions to disrupt the fleet sector with its range of purpose-built electric vans, trucks and buses. It has even revealed plans to dip a toe into the highly competitive car market.

#### MAJOR INVESTMENTS

Arrival may have only existed for a few years, but it has already attracted big-ticket investment, including \$100 million (£73m) from Hyundai, which will see the carmaker and its sister brand Kia utilise Arrival components and technology in their own electric cars.

The Oxfordshire-based manufacturer is now listed on the Nasdaq with an initial valuation of \$13 billion (£9.54bn); its current market capitalisation stands at a little more than \$4.2bn (£3bn).

Since that early dalliance with the UK's largest fleet operator, Arrival has moved on to collaborate closely with global delivery giant UPS on its 3.5-tonne van.

Two years ago, UPS placed an order for 10,000 vehicles. The first of these will be delivered this quarter, with production ramping up to full capacity by the end of the year.

UPS has played a "critical" role in the development of the electric vans, according to Arrival. Its feedback has helped to fine-tune and evolve the design, technology and key features to maximise their usefulness, reliability and durability.

During an exclusive tour of Arrival's R&D facility in Banbury, close to its first 'microfactory' production plant in Bicester (more on that shortly), *Fleet News* asked vice-president of product Patrick Bion and head of vans James Broomer why it had taken so long to get the production vehicle to market.

"We had to solve more than just the vehicle itself; it was about the technology, the materials and the components across three vehicle programmes – bus, van and car," says Bion.

"We knew there was huge demand from fleets, and we were keen to move fast, but we had two

priorities: price and scalability. If we had rushed into traditional manufacturing processes, components and materials, we would not have been able to scale or get the right price for the customer."

Essentially, in addition to designing the vehicle, Arrival had to come up with a whole new way of making it.

The microfactories – it currently has three globally – will be built wherever there is demand and can be set up and making vehicles within six months. They are largely self-sufficient, with Arrival owning the end-to-end process from raw material to finished product, which eliminates the need to ship parts all over the world, saving time, money and the environment.

This focus on sustainability and efficiency isn't just about reducing costs; it is a fundamental ingredient in Arrival's DNA.

Each microfactory is capable of making 10,000 vehicles in an area of just 100,000 sq ft – about the size of two football pitches.

"That's the right volume for a city or region," says Bion, who spent four years at Tesla. "There is no shipping; we are not pushing carbon down the line."

#### RIVALS HAVE CAUGHT UP

The production delays have, inevitably, meant that traditional manufacturers have caught up with their own electric vans, but that doesn't faze Arrival.

"We celebrate this because it influences the battery cost and infrastructure, so it's good news," Bion says. "But they (rival manufacturers) have to balance the commercial prosperity of their diesel vehicles with electric, which means they lose ☺"

**“WE HAD TO SOLVE MORE THAN JUST THE VEHICLE ITSELF; IT WAS ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY, THE MATERIALS AND THE COMPONENTS”**

PATRICK BION, ARRIVAL



Broomer and Bion point out some of the van's key attributes to *Fleet News* editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

C money or have low margins. We don't have that issue; we don't want product compromises."

Price, he adds, will be among Arrival's key differentiators, both purchase price and total cost of ownership (TCO).

Savings on fuel, servicing and price, less downtime and better reliability point to a 17-18% reduction in TCO versus a comparable diesel van.

Among the innovations claimed to minimise TCO are the use of new body materials, which reduce servicing costs and extend length of operation, and internally designed components which remove reliance on tier one suppliers.

The company reassessed traditional methods and materials which largely centred on "energy inefficient" stamping, welding and painting. It designed fully recyclable glass fibre reinforced polypropylene composite panels which are attached to an aluminium structure.

During identical impact testing, the composite panels withstood damage better than conventional panels, enabling the vehicle to remain operational and repairs to be carried out in situ rather than at a bodyshop. They are also less susceptible to rust.

However, if the panel is ruined, Arrival is able to chop it up and re-use in another part. In addition, they are not painted but moulded in the required colour, which means scratches do not show up.

#### MAKE YOUR OWN PARTS

The panels are made at the Bicester plant, with each taking around 20 minutes. Their simplicity means that, theoretically, a fleet with a workshop could buy the press to make their own parts, although the company has also signed agreements with Kwik-Fit and Rivus to act as its aftersales network.

The vehicles feature over-the-air software for the latest safety and technical upgrades, while predictive maintenance will identify any potential faults before they happen.

Arrival has also shone the spotlight on length of ownership. With typical replacement cycles of four-to-five years, and very few fleets stretching beyond seven, Bion believes this is a "missed opportunity". He wants Arrival vehicles to last longer – potentially 10-15 years or more.

"We can upgrade vehicles over time because we have ownership of all the parts," he adds.

Bion recognises that there will be a certain

**Bion and Broomer explain why sustainability is a core part of the Arrival DNA**



"nervousness" about keeping vehicles beyond a decade and accepts that Arrival will need to prove itself on quality and, most importantly, robustness and reliability.

Consequently, it has spent considerable time on component testing, assisted by UPS.

"UPS's involvement has been critical and a differentiating factor for us to engage with fleets so early on in the process. They wanted to influence the design of the vehicle but couldn't with other manufacturers, but we could offer them that opportunity," says Bion.

#### VANS, TRUCKS AND CARS SET FOR ARRIVAL

The first vehicle to roll off Arrival's production lines this year will be a large van, available as 3.5-tonne and 4.25-tonne in high roof specification, the latter with an impressive turning circle of less than 12.5 metres. By 2023, it will be available with three roof heights and four body lengths, together with a chassis cab for conversions.

The battery pack options will be 67kWh, 89kWh, 111kWh and 133kWh, offering range of between 180-350km (112-218 miles).

Arrival will also launch a seven-tonne small truck, effectively a scaled-up version of its van with payload options from one tonne to 3.5 tonnes. Offering excellent manoeuvrability and ergonomics, it will feature larger batteries of 200kWh and 400kWh for extended range.

Charging speeds for the vans will be 11kw for return-to-base fleets and overnight charging or 22kw for vehicles working double shifts or requiring use of the public network. There will also be the option of 120kw DC fast charging for the likes of grocery fleets.

"The key is to offer the right variants for the right job," says Patrick Bion.

Charging times are typically 60-90 minutes for a 0-80% fill, even for the larger battery packs.

The battery packs are modular and scalable. If a cell fails, the vehicle will continue to operate, just with slightly less range. And individual modules – 18-36 in a van – can be removed and replaced.

"We monitor the performance of the battery,

and we receive an alert if there is a problem so we can pre-empt or immediately address it," says Bion.

From mid-2022, the Arrival electric bus will enter production, while in 2024, Arrival will introduce a range of smaller vans.

It has also unveiled a car targeted at ride-hailing companies.

Developed alongside drivers from Uber, the car has twice the legroom of a conventional vehicle of the same length. It will now start testing ahead of a product launch still a couple of years away.

"The ride-hailing market is the first one we want to solve, but there will be an opportunity to extend into the private market or the company car market," says Bion.



Scan here to watch highlights from the Fleet News interview



Scan here to watch the Arrival van walkaround



Scan here to watch the Arrival car walkaround

"It has helped us to understand and improve durability and duty cycles and address battery degradation. The trials were an opportunity to test, find and solve problems."

UPS feedback on incident damage enabled Arrival to assess which panels should be bonded and where they should be split to speed up replacement.

Other features influenced by UPS included the removal of door hinges and handles, a traditional weak point on vans through overuse. Instead, Arrival vans have a sliding nearside door which opens via a capacitive touchpoint.

UPS also influenced the lower floor height, making access easier and reducing the potential for knee damage by drivers leaping from the cab, and the walk-through bulkhead.

Other design tweaks include bringing the driver closer to the windscreens which has been extended lower by pushing the dash line down.

This improves driver visibility by 20% and minimises the blind spot – a child can be spotted several metres closer to the vehicle, for example.

Companies can choose traditional wing mirrors or e-mirrors; the latter protrude by just 250mm, reducing the chances of damage.

Bespoke shelving solutions are available, although Bion quickly adds that Arrival has no plans to become

**“WE HAVE CAPACITY TO MEET DEMAND EXPECTATIONS IN 2022 AND 2023. THE UK WILL BE A MAJOR MARKET”**

**PATRICK BION, ARRIVAL**

Arrival manufactures and assembles 70% of the electrical architecture itself, enabling big leaps forward. Its vans are now capable of travelling up to 218 miles (see panel for model information).

Bion describes its range figures as being "real-world", adding: "We are conservative on our forecasts. WLTP [the official testing programme] doesn't matter – we look at the worst-world figures."

The company carefully monitors battery degradation, cell health, drive cycles, charging and energy consumption – all vital contributors to long-term range capabilities.

"We can advise fleets on the best use," Bion says.

By the end of this year, Arrival will be producing its electric van "in the low thousands"; full capacity of 10,000 units at the Bicester microfactory will be achieved in 2023 with most earmarked for the UK and a few for mainland Europe.

Within five years, the company expects to be selling "hundreds of thousands of vehicles globally", says Bion.

To accommodate this, the number of micro-factories will swell to double digits in the next couple of years and to three figures shortly after. "Four or five" will be in the UK, according to Bion.

"We have capacity to meet demand expectations in 2022 and 2023," he adds. "The UK will be a major market."



# 'Green transition is massive' and Sogo is well placed for it

Within a year of launch, dealer-backed green mobility provider has surged into FN50. *Mike Roberts* reports

**A**demand for vehicle contracts with greater flexibility coupled with the desire to test a range of electric vehicles (EVs) to understand their suitability in different scenarios has helped fuel the growth of green mobility provider Sogo.

The company is backed by dealer group Cambria Automobiles and is the result of a conversation between Karl Howkins, who now heads up the business, and Cambria chairman and chief executive officer Mark Lavery. "Mark told me that he wanted to get into fleet and I told him that offering mobility services was the way to go, I could see it's what consumers wanted," says Howkins.

Howkins has enjoyed many years in the automotive industry since he started washing cars as a teenager at a Vauxhall dealership. He quickly rose through the ranks to take up various managing director positions, latterly at Citroën UK.

## HALL OF FAME MEMBER

His father and Sogo colleague is well-connected Fleet News Hall of Famer Maurice Howkins, whose career includes 50 years at Vauxhall and eight at General Motors, where he was Europe-wide corporate sales director. "Dad was the reason I started work at a Vauxhall dealership and in the car industry; I had no choice really," he jokes.

Sogo describes itself as a 'green mobility provider offering customers ultra-flexible terms with monthly leasing on cars and vans'. It was launched in January 2021. Customers include individuals as well as micro businesses, SMEs (small-to-medium-sized enterprises) and large corporates.

Last year, it teamed up with BP to operate a carbon-neutral fleet across petrol, diesel and EVs. It also joined the energy giant's Target Neutral programme to help fleet customers measure, reduce and offset their carbon emissions. Another service aims to help drivers stuck in long-term leases and finance agreements via an equity release scheme.

Buying vehicles in bulk meant Sogo had a healthy

**Karl Howkins held various managing director positions before heading up Sogo**

**ORGANISATION:** Sogo  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR:**  
Karl Howkins  
**TIME IN ROLE:** One year  
**HEADQUARTERS:**  
Milton Keynes  
**EMPLOYEES:** 22

supply available when fleets struggled to source them elsewhere because of the impact of the global semiconductor and component shortage. It proved to be a real ace up the company's sleeve.

Howkins explains: "SMEs and corporates contacted us saying 'we can't get vehicles, can you help?' and we usually could."

Last year's growth saw it enter the FN50, the *Fleet News* list of the UK's top 50 contract hire and leasing companies, at number 41.

No business is too small or too big to be a customer and Howkins is keen that Sogo spreads its net far and wide.

"I want a presence in every sales channel," he

says. "I want to be in private, SME, micro, corporates, all of it. We're quite strong with a few fleets of around 300-400 vehicles. One we started with 10 vehicles and now we're at 114, which is almost half of their total fleet."

"With corporates, we're happy for them to just give us a try with a couple of vehicles. They may be perfectly happy with their existing supplier."

Howkins describes the company's approach with SMEs as 'old school'.

He says: "We'll pick up the phone and ask what vehicles they have and when they're due to change, and then we'll call them back. We are all car people in Sogo; it's an industry we love and know about."

#### COMPANY GROWTH

The approach has served the company well. Since launch, employee numbers have grown from four to 22 and last year the company moved into bigger premises in Milton Keynes.

Howkins adds: "Our first year couldn't have gone any better in many ways. We never envisioned we would grow as quickly as we have and it's a credit to a really great team. When we started out, we thought the business would be 30% traditional contract hire and leasing, with two-, three- or four-year contacts, but we're 99% flexi and just 1% traditional."

Howkins says Sogo is seeing two main factors drive its growth: "Firstly, companies are seeking greater flexibility in managing their mobility requirements as the pandemic continues to provide challenges. Secondly, our model allows them to test a range of EV product to understand its suitability for different scenarios."

He also attributes success to how Sogo can meet a company's desire to be green, even if decision-makers are nervous about making the switch to an electric fleet.

"The green transition, as we call it, is massive. The benefit for our business model is that technology is changing constantly. Do businesses want to lock themselves into a vehicle that's got a 250-mile range today, but which will have a much longer range in four years' time?" Howkins asks.

"We help businesses and individuals to have their first experience of electric vehicles. Typical drivers' concerns are 'how do we charge it?' and 'how far can I go in it?' and 'what if I don't like it in six months' time?'. That's fine, we'll change it."

By the end of 2021, 40% of the 800 cars on Sogo's fleet were electric, with an average lease term of just six months. The longest Sogo wants a customer to keep a car is around 15 months.

**OUR LONG-TERM PLAN IS ANYTHING TO DO WITH MOBILITY – WHERE THE INDUSTRY WILL BE IN 10 YEARS' TIME IS EXCITING. FOR US IT MIGHT BE E-SCOOTERS, PLANES, WHO KNOWS //**

**KARL HOWKINS, SOGO**

Howkins says: "We're not a daily rental company; the minimum we'll supply a vehicle for is one month. Customers like the flexibility we offer, they like that we keep the tech updated constantly and they like that we'll take the car back if a driver leaves the company."

Salary sacrifice is another growth area, as Howkins explains: "Our salary sacrifice scheme is growing steadily and has three main benefits – we change the car every year, if there's a change of circumstance and they need a bigger car for whatever reason we'll change the car within the year and the third benefit is it's all on our balance sheet, and a lot of businesses prefer that," he says.

"We'll always change vehicles at a maximum of 12 months. We need to ensure the vehicle remains off the company's balance sheet and the employee has the latest technology available."

He adds: "Employee retention is a massive thing and if you do salary sacrifice right, it can be seen as a bit of a pay increase for the employee who's getting a new car for less than they would have done."

Relatively low mileage vehicles combined with the fact most will only ever have had one driver keep residual values high.

All cars are fitted with telematics to not only alert drivers that they are approaching their mileage allowance, but also to provide data about how far a company's cars travel each day, should there be any range anxiety concerns when planning an electrification strategy. The technology can also offer traditional telematics services to fleets, such as tracking and driver monitoring.

End-of-contract vehicles are sold through the franchised dealer network, including those owned by its parent company.

#### HIGH USED VALUES

Commenting on the high used values currently being achieved by used cars and vans, Howkins says: "I've never seen anything like it in my career, but we don't build a business model around it because it won't last."

The company's fleet size stands at 2,500 vehicles and it aims to double that number this year. It also plans to be a big player in all areas of mobility.

Howkins says: "Our aspiration for the next three to four years is to keep growing in a sustainable fashion. Our long-term plan is anything to do with mobility – where the industry will be in 10 years' time is exciting. For us, it might be e-scooters, planes, who knows."



## GET THE MOST OUT OF FLEET SOFTWARE

Operating the right fleet management software can have major efficiency and compliancy benefits for an organisation, reports *Catherine Chetwynd*

**W**hether you are progressing from paper-based records, keeping track of a growing or changing fleet, or assessing fuel consumption with a view to adding more electric vehicles (EVs), it is essential to define your requirements closely before choosing fleet software.

There are numerous advantages to the technology, including driver safety and compliance, better service, greater efficiencies, cost cutting and, crucially, centrally-held data, bringing visibility of all things fleet.

And because the software can track vehicle locations, this can include monitoring accident hotspots and other tricky areas.

But, with an almost bewildered array of capabilities available with modern fleet software packages, fleet decision-makers should ask each department what they would like to get out of a software system to ensure they get the right mix, says Ash Connell, head of sales and customer success for r2c.

Ease of use is another factor. Apps allow drivers to communicate easily with managers, useful for a mobile workforce, with automatic authorisation potentially part of the service.

But check out how user-friendly the software is before you buy; these days, there's no excuse for clunky tech. Also, if your company has a green agenda, make sure your suppliers are equally environmentally friendly. For example, vehicle delivery specialist Engineius drives EVs to customers, rather than transporting them.

Those with a mainly EV fleet, or planning to go that way, might benefit from tools from charging solutions company Mina to monitor drivers' charging costs at home. Homecharge pays the monthly cost of charging a company EV, removing the need for drivers to raise expense claims and ensuring home energy bills do not rocket. The Mina Chargepass contactless card enables charging while on the move or at the workplace.

#### LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Technology seems to evolve by the minute, so stay alert to progress. Your software should be scalable to keep pace with changes in your fleet and it is important to ask the provider about regular updates to their platform and how customers can benefit from that.

Given the huge amounts of data that managers have to process, simplicity is all.

"Tools such as customisable dashboards provide easy visibility of key factors," says FleetCheck managing director Peter Golding.

Platforms support services that range from location or in-app chat for live communication.

Engineius has launched customisable text alerts. For example, as soon as a customer places an order, the automated system can message the dealership that will receive that vehicle, confirming the order has been placed with specific actions.

Engineius can also customise these texts so they are on brand.

And for smaller fleets, Chevin's FleetWave Lite tracks compliance of drivers and vehicles, and running costs.

**“SYSTEMS THAT ARE NOT WELL SUPPORTED CAN QUICKLY LEAD TO INCONVENIENCE, ADDITIONAL COSTS AND VEHICLE DOWNTIME”**

WILLIAM BONNET, OEC

"Users can upgrade to FleetWave Core and Advanced; the software can grow as the business expands," says CEO and founder Ashley Sowerby.

#### THE RIGHT SUPPLIER

Professional relationships are not just about technology; cultural compatibility is also vital.

To complete the picture, add the flexibility and scalability to respond to changes as they happen, plus levels of support, whether that is a 24-hour helpline, a commitment to react within an agreed time or what is included in the service package.

How a provider handles vehicle downtime is a particularly knotty issue and close to a fleet manager's heart and wallet.

"Not only is it important that suppliers invest properly in software systems but in their service and support teams, too," says William Bonnet, director business development (fleet) for OEC.

"Systems that are not well supported can quickly lead to inconvenience, additional costs and vehicle downtime."

Part of the cultural fit should be high standards of compliance regarding handling your data – and their suppliers' standards should be equally high.

It is worth noting that fines for GDPR violations in Q3 2021 hit nearly €1 billion (£845 million), 20 times greater than Q1 and Q2 combined.

Meet the people you'll be dealing with day-to-day and check out their knowledge, experience and credentials, visit their premises to get an idea of the atmosphere and their account management processes, and talk to their customers.

"A good software company will happily put you in touch with their users," says Golding.

Communication and the ability to share ideas are inherent in good service and that includes benchmarking and agreements on best practice.

#### SOFTLY, SOFTLY

Although having access to modular software that can be adopted or dropped according to requirement, avoid the temptation to take on everything that is available.

That said, modules have their advantages. ☺

## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Martin Evans, MD, Jaama



The changing landscape of vehicle and driver management has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic which has influenced companies to review their fleet management software needs.

Fleets have come to terms with the need to evolve their operations to keep up with the many industry changes – optimising vehicle and driver safety and compliance, remote working, onboarding electric cars and vans and rolling out new car schemes to optimise employee recruitment and retention to name just a few.

Having better systems in place means fleets can collect and manage driver and vehicle data more efficiently to support strategic and business decision making. Manual paperwork is ready being replaced by automation and remote functionality including apps, reporting dashboards and workshop touchscreens.

We are proud of the part our industry has played in optimising the efficiency of UK fleets.

**“HAVING BETTER SYSTEMS IN PLACE MEANS FLEETS CAN COLLECT AND MANAGE DRIVER AND VEHICLE DATA MORE EFFICIENTLY TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AND BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING”**

  
fleet, leasing and hire software innovators

"Rolling out a complete system does not have to happen in year one," says Martin Evans, managing director of Jaama.

"Companies often take a phased approach to spread the disruption to their business and implement modules in order of importance."

"Work with your purchasing team to get the best solution for your requirements."

He adds: "Work out what you want to achieve, understand what is available in the marketplace and what it will cost."

"Then put together a compelling return on investment case that will be signed off by your company board."

Check how you will be charged and look out for hidden extras such as a tariff per transaction, for example, which will ramp up daily costs. Transparency is a critical part of the deal.

Compatibility with other systems is also a must, so that all company data is in one place and easily accessible, allowing maximum efficiencies, both operational and financial.

And check how easily it will be implemented with your drivers.

"Good software is intuitive and shouldn't require hours and hours of staff training," says Angela Montacute, CEO of Digital Innk.

Cloud-based software is most advantageous because there are no installation costs and any updates are done away from the customer's premises; it is also accessible from mobile devices.

Apps allow the recording of live information, which is valuable for a mobile workforce and for an organisation operating its own workshop.

"Look for a system that can also be used to manage all service, maintenance and inventory control directly," says Chevin Fleet Solutions vice-president of product and marketing Will Wycks.

#### GET IT RIGHT

Taking on anything new, whether hardware or software, can be disruptive, so discuss with your

**“STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND FULLY AND BE ON-BOARD WITH THE REASON FOR CHANGE AND THE VISION OF IMPROVING YOUR BUSINESS”**

MARTIN EVANS, JAAMA

supplier what it will involve. Handover should be smooth, simple and speedy; ensure data integrations can be handled effortlessly.

And keep drivers appraised of what is being bought, what it does and any changes in business processes. This includes training, which should be planned some way before implementation.

"Stakeholders need to understand fully and be on-board with the reason for change and the vision of improving your business. This is not a one-off exercise and they need to be engaged throughout the project," says Evans.

R2c recommends having one person to oversee the programme and be the main point of contact.

#### RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

People do not like change, so good communication is important and should overcome any resistance or discontent; and bear in mind that not everyone is tech savvy, some hand-holding may be necessary.

Jaama also brings all sources of supply chain data into a customer's Key2 system via API links to create a complete picture of the fleet.

"This is a powerful way of leaving no stone unturned when it comes to onboarding a fleet management system," says Evans.

If the software you have chosen has the required flexibility, it can be put to numerous uses.

"R2c Online has customers that use their digital driver to monitor shift times; others use driver check completions as a KPI (key performance indicator) for regional managers," says Connell.

Although integration with other suppliers' software is helpful, it is not always possible.

"Don't see this as a barrier, instead look at how these software systems can complement each other," says Connell.

"Using a system for its core functionality often proves more beneficial, rather than relying on integrations."



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# DELIVERY DELAYED? DON'T STAND IDLE

Get drivers fully on board with switch to electric while waiting for vehicles to arrive, fleets advised. *Mike Roberts* reports

**O**r ganisations forced to wait months for the delivery of electric vans because of the global semiconductor and component shortage should use the time to their advantage.

This includes looking at how the commercial vehicles will be charged once in use, launching driver training programmes so they can be put to work as soon as they arrive and creating excitement among drivers about the plans to go electric.

This advice comes from British Gas fleet manager Steve Winter who started the journey to electric in 2014. The utility company has 2,000 electric vans on order, with 1,000 having joined the fleet already.

Winter said fleets must be prepared for a long wait between ordering the vehicles and their delivery because of the semiconductor shortage which is likely to continue to affect production well into this year.

"Don't sit back and say 'well, I've ordered them so there's nothing else I can do,'" he says. "Sort your driver training out and create excitement among drivers. We took ours to a test track so they could test an electric car. Then, when the vehicles finally arrive, everything will be in place to start using them."

A similar approach is being taken by Altrad Fleet Services whose fleet manager Sarah Turner explained in last month's *Fleet News* that the company had an order for 60 electric vehicles (EVs) cancelled by the manufacturer at the end of last year because of the shortage.

"I think it's done us a favour," Turner told *Fleet News*. "Over the next 12 months it will allow us the opportunity to sit back and look at how we get the infrastructure in place and other things like charge cards and policies."

## TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

When considering a switch to electric vans, Winter says it's important that fleets use a total cost of ownership (TCO) approach to compare EVs with their internal combustion engine (ICE) equivalent.

He says: "We've been on this journey since 2014 and our plan was to accelerate to a full EV fleet quickly. But we soon realised TCO modelling is very delicate, and you must get the numbers right. And there will be surprises along the way that will affect the TCO model."

One such surprise was the Government's recent announcement that it was cutting the plug-in car and van grant.

For small vans, 2.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight (gvw) or less, there was a cut of £500. The grant, which had given consumers 35% off the purchase price up to a maximum of £3,000, is now £2,500.

For larger vans, 2.0-3.5 tonnes gvw, the grant has also been reduced, from a maximum of £6,000 to £5,000. There were no changes to grant rates for vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes.

Leasing companies have already confirmed that lease costs will rise as a result. But Winter highlights that it's not just the lease rate that fleets should consider when comparing an EV with an ICE vehicle.

"A fleet's TCO model will be affected by this announcement, and they've got to understand how it will work," he says. "They may get challenged by the finance department because the lease rate has gone up significantly on an EV. But, on the other hand, maintenance costs, fuel costs and accident repair costs will have come down. But it's a different budget and fleets need to recognise and understand that."

Winter also urges companies about to start on the electrification journey to embark of some sort of driver training, particularly for commercial vehicles. It should form part of a bigger education programme to get drivers fully on board with the move to EVs.

## CHANGE OF ROUTINE

Having drivers who are fully aware of the benefits of EVs and who are itching to get behind the wheel of one is of paramount importance to a successful transition to an all-electric fleet.

Winter says: "Most commercial van drivers will never have driven an automatic before. And they're used to stopping at a garage once or twice a week, filling up with diesel, buying a coffee and a newspaper. This all changes with an EV."

"Communication with drivers is vital," he says. "Why are we doing this? What's the benefit to the business? What's the benefit to the wider environment? You must create an enthusiasm for the switch to the electric vehicles."

"Commercial drivers can make it fail – if you run out of diesel, you can get a rescue company to come and put five litres of fuel in, but if you run out of charge then it's much more difficult to address. They need to be fully on board with the switch."

When it comes to charging the vehicles, Winter explains that home chargers are fitted where possible as British Gas engineers take their vehicles home each night. They are recompensed for the energy used to charge the vehicle.

However, not all drivers can charge at home and not all businesses can install workplace chargers, so they are forced to rely on the public charging network, which is not always practical.

"We have drivers go to a charge point and find there's a queue, which is something we really don't want to happen," Winter says.

The answer, he suggests, would be the launch of a national fleet network of charging points that can be booked in advance by fleets and drivers. Such an initiative has already been backed by *Fleet News* and the Association of Fleet Operators (AFO).

Winter says companies which can install at-work chargers could recoup some of the vast cost of



## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

**Jon Lawes, managing director,  
Novuna Vehicle Solutions**



The vehicle leasing market is changing; latest SMMT figures illustrate the demand for electric vehicles (EVs) is only going one way.

This is following a record-breaking year for EV registrations in 2021 and we are now fast approaching the watershed moment where one-in-two new cars registered will be an EV.

With motorists increasingly realising the environmental benefits of EVs, and a growing variety of EV products on the market, we will continue to see healthy EV registration figures for some time.

But it's not just automotive market repositioning itself to address climate change. We are delighted to have embarked on a major rebrand from Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions to Novuna Vehicle Solutions.

Novuna comes from the Latin words novo – new and una –together, which captures the essence of our business and how we work with fleets, creating innovative solutions together and supporting our customers to switch, save and future-proof their fleets.

While EV adoption has increased rapidly, for commercial fleets the race to zero might feel like a marathon with product and infrastructure challenges still present with only two renewal cycles left before the 2030 deadline.

At Novuna Vehicle Solutions, we're already transforming UK fleets with absolute confidence to achieve decarbonisation targets with our end-to-end electrification solutions.

This model helps fleets reduce their carbon emissions and transition to cleaner vehicles, by assessing fleet challenges, providing funding, building solutions and managing charging infrastructure, as well as the back-office management needed to support a widespread adoption of electric vehicles.

Find out more about how to switch, save and future-proof your fleet with Novuna Vehicle Solutions today...

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electric-vehicle-leasing/fleet-  
electrification/](http://www.novunavehiclesolutions.co.uk/electric-vehicle-leasing/fleet-electrification/)

installation by allowing other companies to use them.

Paul Hollick, chair of the AFP, estimates that between 60% and 70% of commercial drivers do not have access to driveway charging.

He adds: "This means that 30%-40% of the fleet can be electrified quite easily, but how are the others going to be able to charge overnight?"

It's often said that charging is one of the biggest obstacles facing organisations electrifying their fleets.

### COST OF CHARGERS

The cost of buying and installing different chargers varies hugely. Dundee City Council fleet manager Fraser Crichton puts the cost of a 50kW rapid charger at around £22,000; a 150kW unit could be three times as much.

But a 7kW charger comes in at less than £1,000 and a 22kW unit is less than £2,000 (not including Government grants).

At a Fleet200 Executive Club meeting last year, Crichton advised fleets not to over-invest in charging infrastructure too early.

He said as vehicle technology improves, it's likely the demand for rapid chargers will decrease.

# Specialist accident management for EVs

**AX has developed a portfolio of services designed to manage repair costs, minimise vehicle downtime, keep drivers mobile and capture valuable claims and risk data**

The rapid transition of company cars and vans to electric powertrains is creating a need for specialist support services beyond charging networks and payment systems.

While initial fleet focus has, understandably, been on electric vehicle (EV) selection, range and recharging infrastructure, the reality of everyday operational experience has also forced fleet managers to resolve crash repairs, source temporary replacement plug-in vehicles, and analyse what, if any, different risks are posed by battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

Well ahead of the game, accident assistance and aftercare specialist AX Automotive has been managing the repair of EVs for more than 18 months, minimising costs and vehicle downtime on behalf of fleet clients, and accumulating valuable data on the collision risks posed by EVs.

Working with many of the UK's largest fleets, including nine of the top 20 FN50 leasing companies, AX has generated fascinating insights into the myths and minefields surrounding electric company cars.

EVs are not, for example, proving any more expensive to repair than similar generation internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, provided their batteries are not damaged ("a very rare occurrence,"

according to AX Automotive managing director Scott Hamilton-Cooper and so long as the vehicle is channelled to an appropriately qualified repairer.

"Appointing the right repairer first time plays a significant role in reducing downtime," said Hamilton-Cooper. "At AX we pride ourselves on using OEM-approved repairers, which are all capable of repairing EVs."

Maintaining a good relationship with these bodyshops also makes a material difference to the repair process.

"Understanding the challenges that repairers face in the current climate, especially with parts delays, and offering them equitable terms, means they prioritise our repairs," he added.

"Ultimately, we strive to be the work provider of choice for repairers. If we can get that right, it can have a huge benefit to the journey of the driver and the fleet manager, resulting in short repair times, good quality repairs and tighter cost control."

AX has also learnt the importance of providing EV drivers with an electric replacement car while their own cars are off the road for repair.

The minimal fuel costs, avoidance of congestion charges, and environmental benefits of electric powertrains become rapidly ingrained in EV drivers – AX

research has found that only one third of EV drivers would accept an equivalent petrol or diesel model while their car is being repaired.

"Once a driver has transitioned to an EV, they become invested in that journey, and get used to not having to buy fuel or pay £15 to enter a city," said Hamilton-Cooper. "We previously saw early EV adopters sending us their fuel bills for reimbursement when we provided them with an ICE replacement; – a warning sign that EV drivers need a different solution.

"For most EV drivers today, the thought of stepping back into an ICE vehicle is more of a hurdle than it has ever been."

This has led to the creation of AX Electric, which guarantees an EV replacement vehicle for EV owners following an accident, including a Tesla-for-Tesla brand guarantee so drivers can continue to enjoy the Tesla Supercharger network.

A quarter of AX's almost 3,000-strong fleet is now plug-in, split evenly between battery electric and plug-in hybrid models, and the company's replacement strategy is for powertrains to mirror their market shares in new car sales figures, so it can offer all drivers a comparable EV, with similar or longer range, the same charging capability and the same recharging payment methods.

Further investment is seeing micro





AX Managing Director  
Scott Hamilton-Cooper

distribution hubs set up around the country to support AX's five superhubs and four regional hubs, where its fleet is based.

All the hubs have charging infrastructure to ensure the EVs are delivered with a minimum 75 miles of charge in their batteries by professional delivery drivers capable of providing a comprehensive vehicle handover.

Drilling down into the company's claims data reveals interesting trends: Teslas, for example, are victims of a rising number of incidents where they are being hit by another vehicle while parked and unattended.

"Tesla's Sentry Mode technology, which acts like CCTV around the vehicle while it's idle, has been able to identify third parties that previously insurers would not have been able to identify," said Hamilton-Cooper.

AX is also picking up an increase in rear-end collisions in new cars (both EV and ICE).

"Newer vehicles have levels of technology, especially with automated braking and collision-detection sensors, which, effectively, allow a computer to

**“ULTIMATELY,  
WE STRIVE  
TO BE THE  
WORK PROVIDER  
OF CHOICE FOR  
REPAIRERS”**

**SCOTT HAMILTON-COOPER**

take control of braking," said Hamilton-Cooper. "This is excellent at reducing front end collisions, but less good at preventing rear end ones, unless the car behind has the same technology and can react at the same time as the computer in the car in front."

Delivering even deeper insight into the causes of crashes and near misses, AX has recently enjoyed a seven-figure investment in its IT system to future-proof it for the transition of data capture from retro-fitted telematics black boxes to factory-

fitted OEM connected car technology. The identification of higher risk drivers and behaviours enables fleets to work with AX and introduce corrective strategies, through commissioning third parties to provide DVLA licence checks, web-based driver assessments and in-vehicle defensive driver training.

Further investment has seen the launch of AX Motor Assist, which provides an end-to-end claims management service from first notification of loss (FNOL) through to roadside recovery, managing vehicle repairs, organising replacement vehicles and completing claims.

"One of the benefits of AX Motor Assist is the option to take modular solutions, so a fleet or leasing company could choose to have an all-encompassing accident management service or, for example, opt for AX Electric as a standalone product. All of our services are designed to minimise vehicle downtime, keep drivers mobile, reduce accident risks and limit repair costs when collisions do occur," he concluded.

**For more information please call: 0121 412 1055  
or email: [fleetenquiries@ax-uk.com](mailto:fleetenquiries@ax-uk.com)**





# VAUXHALL ASTRA

Vauxhall adds desirability to practicality with its new-look eighth-generation Astra

By Matt de Prez

**T**he Vauxhall Astra has undergone the biggest overhaul in its 42-year life, with the new eighth-generation model sharing only a name with its General Motors-developed predecessor.

This is the first Astra to utilise Stellantis underpinnings, which means it's closely related to the impressive new Peugeot 308.

As a fleet market stalwart, the Astra has been known for its durability, practicality and easy-to-drive nature – people didn't always desire an Astra, but they were often happy to live with one.

Things are changing, however. The new Astra is making an effort to be aspirational. It's a looker, thanks to the Vauxhall Visor front end, sharp body lines and new proportions afforded by its new platform. This might just be the first Astra that will be chosen by the heart, rather than the head.

There's a high level of standard spec too, although

that's probably to counterbalance the fact that prices have risen by almost £4,000. The entry-level Astra is now priced at £23,570, just a tad less than the VW Golf and slightly ahead of the Ford Focus.

Running costs for the cheapest model are the most expensive of the trio, based on a four-year 80,000 cycle, but are still respectable at 38p per mile.

The plug-in hybrid version is more compelling. Vauxhall says it was developed with cost parity in mind, meaning it shouldn't cost any more to run than a normal petrol derivative.

Figures, provided by Auto Trader, suggest the Astra Hybrid-e in mid-spec trim is 1p per mile cheaper than the base petrol variant.

Similarities with the 308 are apparent from the get-go, with items such as the key, door handles and gear selector all borrowed from the Stellantis parts bin. Those who dislike the Peugeot's i-Cockpit layout will be pleased to find a conventional set-up is used in the Astra.

We'd say the Astra has more in common with the Golf, on the inside. The twin 10-inch screen setup, providing infotainment and digital instruments, is very similar to that of the venerable VW. While the build quality doesn't quite live up to Golf levels, ergonomically, the Astra is superior. It's as if Vauxhall's designers have aimed to replicate the Golf dash but without all the frustrations.

There's a useful row of switches beneath the screen that wouldn't look out of place in a Lexus, offering control of key functions such as the interior temperature, demister and heated seats. A proper volume knob for the radio is a particular highlight.

The infotainment system is big step up for Vauxhall. It's lifted from the 308 and is straightforward to use. There's even a handy rubber strip beneath the display to steady your hand when using the touchscreen.

Elsewhere in the cabin, quality is a mixed bag. The key touchpoints are positive, but it's apparent where cost savings were made.

We liked the seats, which are comfortable and supportive, while the thin-rimmed leather steering wheel is a welcome departure from the much thicker 'sporty' ones that many other cars use now.

Vauxhall has lowered the seating position in the new Astra, giving a sportier feel.

The only downside to the driving position is the siting of the pedals, which are closer to the driver than we'd like. It's relatively easy to overcome, by pushing the seat back and extending the steering wheel, but that means there's reduced room for a rear passenger.

To drive, the Astra is not quite as sharp as a 308 – Vauxhall fettled the chassis to meet its own requirements and, while the result is a little benign in comparison, the new Astra is the most fluid and best-driving to date.

At motorway speeds it's quiet and smooth, while the less-eager steering makes it more composed for



The infotainment system is a big step up for Vauxhall

# WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



It's becoming more of an obstacle race to drive anywhere now. It used to be that it was just in housing estates that vehicles appeared to

be abandoned on both

sides of the road and manoeuvring around and in between them was challenging.

Now I'm finding, more and more, this annoying parking has also moved out of small streets to the open road. Many 'A' roads are suffering the same problems, but with the added danger of large trucks and buses having to try to dodge in and out of the odd spare space to avoid hitting on-coming traffic, not easy even for these skilled drivers.

As a regular pram-pusher, these vehicles parked on the pavement often make it impossible to get a pram (or wheelchair) through, forcing one onto the road.

In London, it is illegal to park or obstruct the pavement. If this law extends to other parts, which I'm sure it will, this will simply mean that vehicles currently using the pavement to park, will put their cars fully on the road, creating even less room for other road users and increasing hazards.

## Mazda CX-5 launch

It was the first time in a while I left the country to attend a new vehicle launch. Well, actually, it was going from England to Scotland to drive the revised Mazda CX-5.

Launched in 2012, this SUV has sold more than 70,000 in the UK – a great success for Mazda.

We had a brilliant drive across the Trossachs, with spectacular scenery, in a very comfortable and capable car.

Mazda's range, for some reason, may not immediately spring to mind, but it should. It has some good competitive models.

The new CX-5 is one of them and shows minimal changes. Why change something that is already spot-on and doesn't really need many improvements?

## McLaren testing

Down to UTAC Millbrook in Bedfordshire (formerly the Millbrook Proving Ground) to drive two cars from McLaren.

First up was the 720S powered by a V8 4.0-litre that produces 720PS and goes from 0-62mph in a remarkable 2.9 seconds. I took it on the mile-straight and although I should have got it to more than 170mph, I did 'chicken-out' at 153mph. Plenty quick enough for me, thank you. Then it was in the more sedate and practical GT, with a dismal 0-62mph in 3.2 seconds, so slow!

But at UTAC Millbrook, McLaren was able to demonstrate just how fabulous its supercars are in a very safe and controlled environment.

## ENTRY-LEVEL

Vauxhall Astra 1.2 Turbo 110 Design

## PLUG-IN HYBRID

Vauxhall Astra Hybrid-e 180 GS Line

## PREDICTED BEST SELLER

Vauxhall Astra 1.2 Turbo 130 GS Line

### SPECIFICATIONS

P11D Price	£23,570	£32,145	£26,465
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	123	24	124
Range (miles)	51.3	256	51.3
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	28%/£110	7%/£38	28%/£124
Annual VED	£180 then £155	£0 then £145	£180 then £155
Class 1A NIC	£911	£310	£1,023
Fuel cost (ppm)	13	2.5	13
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	38.5ppm	37ppm	41ppm
AFR (ppm)	13	15	13
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£5,320/22.5%	£7,602/23.5%	£6,445/24.5%

Go to [www.fleetnews.co.uk](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk) for tax figures from April 2020-2022

### RIVALS



FORD FOCUS  
1.0T 125 Trend



PEUGEOT 308  
1.2 PureTech 130  
Active Premium (auto)



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF  
1.0 TSI Life

### SPECIFICATIONS

P11D Price	£22,730	£24,400	£24,195
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	121	128	123
Range (miles)	52.3	52.1	52.3
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	28%/£106	29%/£118	28%/£113
Annual VED	£180 then £155	£180 then £155	£180 then £155
Class 1A NIC	£878	£976	£935
Fuel cost (ppm)	13	13	12.5
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	37.5ppm	39ppm	35.5ppm
AFR (ppm)	13	13	13
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£5,963/26%	£5,612/23%	£8,345/34.5%

cruising than the Peugeot. We found the ride on our test car's 18-inch wheels a little firm around town.

There are only three trim levels and four engines for drivers to pick from. A 1.2-litre three-cylinder petrol engine is offered with 110PS or 130PS, alongside a 1.5-litre 130PS diesel.

The headline powertrain, however, is the Hybrid-e: a 1.6-litre petrol motor, paired with an electric motor. It uses a 12.4kWh battery to give a 43-mile range (WLTP) – placing it in the 7% benefit-in-kind tax bracket.

A more potent 225PS hybrid will launch later in the year, as a standalone performance model, while a fully electric model will arrive in 2023.

We tested the 130PS petrol first and found it fairly swift and capable of returning around 48mpg. It can be paired with a notchy six-speed manual or a smoother eight-speed automatic.

The diesel is only expected to account for a small proportion of sales, but does promise around 60mpg. It's a little less eager than the petrol, but still a sound choice for high-mileage users.

The plug-in hybrid is more impressive, albeit £9,000 more expensive than the cheapest new Astra. It will easily cover 35 miles on a charge (Vauxhall advertises 37 as a more realistic expectation to the WLTP figure) and could easily match the diesel's efficiency on longer trips.



It's a refined unit that manages an almost imperceptible transition from electric to petrol. It doesn't feel much quicker than the 130PS petrol in real-world driving, but is noticeably smoother.

All three grades are well-equipped, with the entry-level Design grade getting the twin screen setup, LED headlights and a suite of driver aids. GS Line is the predicted best seller, with a sportier look, parking camera, keyless entry and heated seats. Ultimate comes packed with features like a sunroof, adaptive cruise control and a head-up display.

The new Astra doesn't automatically jump to the top of its class, but it's a much more compelling alternative to the fierce competition than before. It's sensible, no-nonsense transport, like the Astra always was, but now has the all-important desirability factor.



# BMW iX

The interior feels special, but the iX is lacking in the looks department

By Matt de Prez

**B**MW loves a bit of controversy when it launches a new model and, as it embarks on a bold electrification strategy, the iX has undoubtedly been its most questionable choice to date. It bears almost no resemblance to BMW's core model line-up and represents a departure from its traditionally well-revered formula.

The Munich carmaker already has a pair of credible electric cars, the iX3 and i4, in its line-up and plans are afoot for more of its combustion-powered favourites to swap pistons for motors over the next few years.

Think of the iX as the i3 MKII. It's designed to shake up the rule book and show us what BMW's of the future will all be about.

A living concept car, if you like.

The i3's introduction was rocky. It came at a time when the desirability of big, brash SUVs and saloons was waning, but affordable electric cars lacked desirability.

## FLEET PICK

BMW iX XDRIVE40 M SPORT

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£72,850
Monthly BIK (40%)	1%/£24
Class 1A NIC	£101
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£28,755/39.5%
Fuel cost (ppm)	5.5
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	68.4
CO <sub>2</sub> (g/km)	0
Range	264



Traditional BMW buyers weren't keen, but the i3 won many hearts.

Two versions of the iX are available now – iX xDrive40 and iX xDrive 50 – with an M-performance model-badged xDrive M60 to follow this summer.

The xDrive40 can be had for a shade under £70,000 and uses a 76.4kWh battery, giving a range of 264 miles. Opting for the £93,000-plus xDrive50 derivative scores a 111.5kWh battery making the iX capable of travelling 391 miles between charges, according to WLTP tests, but putting it out of reach for most user-choosers.

Both models use two electric motors and have all-wheel drive. The 40 serves up a reasonable 326PS, while the 50 produces 523PS, making it distinctly rapid.

Weight, however, is a problem. The iX is a bit of a porker, tipping the scales at 2.4 tonnes with no passengers, or 2.7 tonnes if you go for the larger battery. While the car's air suspension just about keeps this in check in the bends, it dampens the powertrain's full potential.

On the motorway, the iX is happier. It's quiet, stable

and provides a great view of the road ahead. But, at higher speeds, we found the efficiency hovers around 2.5-2.7mi/kWh. In warmer weather this may improve, but it means the realistic ranges are closer to 200 miles for the 40 and 300 for the 50.

Tech-lovers will not be disappointed with the iX. It's packed with gadgets and innovations. The seats are heated, cooled and can provide a massage. Each is fitted with five surround sound speakers. Everything is managed via the new iDrive system, which can be controlled by voice, touchscreen or using BMW's handy central control knob.

Combined with its airy design and use of high-quality materials, the iX's interior feels special. There's even a hexagonal steering wheel optimised for future autonomous driving capability.

The iX rises to the top of the large electric SUV segment eclipsing its rivals – the Audi e-Tron and Mercedes EQC – with a better range, more technology and similar running costs. But is it the best electric BMW? Well, the powertrain is certainly a highlight, but we prefer it in the lighter, sleeker and, frankly, less ugly i4.



# MERCEDES-BENZ EQS

Mercedes' first look at the all-electric future has the longest range of any car currently on sale

By Matt de Prez

**W**hen we tested the new Mercedes-Benz S-Class in November, we questioned whether it would be overshadowed by the arrival of its electric counterpart, the EQS. As a means of showcasing the latest and greatest Mercedes technology, the EQS has a clear advantage.

It's all-electric, super aerodynamic and takes the S-Class's new infotainment system to a new level.

The EQS is also the first Mercedes to be based on a platform that's designed specifically for electric vehicles (EVs), unlike the EQA, EQB and EQC that all share their underpinnings with existing models.

It is, then, our first taste of what future Mercedes cars will be like. A smaller EQE model will follow the EQS, along with a pair of SUVs.

As the brand's electric flagship, the EQS is priced just less than £100,000. That puts it alongside the likes of the Tesla Model S, Audi e-tron GT and Porsche Taycan.

The Mercedes EQS offers one clear advantage



The EQS's interior has crisp digital displays and high quality materials

over its near rivals, however, and that's its range.

A WLTP figure of 484 miles for the EQS 450, makes it the longest-range electric car currently on sale and, in our experience, a full charge and a careful right-foot could quite easily see more than 400 miles between charges. Range anxiety really is a thing of the past, if you can afford it.

The battery has a 120kWh capacity and can take on enough power to cover 186 miles in 15 minutes, using a 200kW rapid charger.

A single electric motor is used to haul the two-and-a-half-tonne EQS, powering the rear wheels, with an output of 333PS. It gives adequate acceleration – at least on par with an S-Class diesel – but lacks the slingshot effect that some twin-motor EVs deliver at this price point.

Mercedes also offers the 658PS EQS 53 AMG for an extra £55,000, to satisfy those that want a more driver-focused model. For most, the EQS 450 should be more than satisfactory.

As a member of the S-Class family, the EQS provides a high level of luxury, refinement and technology. There's ample rear-seat space, making

the EQS suitable for both chauffeuring and family duties and, unlike its counterpart, the EQS has ditched the traditional saloon configuration and, instead, offers a hatchback.

From the driver's seat, the EQS feels very similar to the S-Class, offering the same high-level of material quality, crisp digital displays and isolation from the outside world. Cars equipped with the MBUX Hyperscreen, an £8,000 option, utilise a full-width digital dashboard that stretches from the instrument cluster to the passenger side. It comprises three displays under one piece of glass.

Achieving a comfortable driving position in the EQS can be a challenge as the dashboard and steering wheel are mounted higher than usual and, when you've finally got the seat high enough to see over the dash, the instrument display is obscured by the steering wheel.

Otherwise, the car is easy to drive. A rear-wheel steering system is fitted as standard, which makes parking much simpler. It also helps to improve dynamics at higher speeds, although the EQS is best enjoyed as a cruiser.

FLEET PICK	
MERCEDES EQS 450 AMG LINE PREMIUM PLUS	
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£106,940
Monthly BIK (40%)	1%/£72
Class 1A NIC	£148
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£43,942/41%
Fuel cost (ppm)	5
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	96
CO <sub>2</sub> (g/km)	0
Range	484



## ► VAUXHALL MOKKA-E

SRI NAV PREMIUM AUTO

**By Luke Neal**

As I write, the much loved Mokka-e sits alone in the office car park while our long-term Volvo XC40 takes its place on my drive. The reason for this exchange is due to a family holiday to Yorkshire and, unfortunately, for a trip like this, the Mokka-e just doesn't cut it.

The problem lies with its useable range, lack of charge point at my holiday destination and my reluctance to stop every 130 miles or so to charge it up. With free charging available at the *Fleet News* office and in my local town, a pure EV suits 95% of my everyday life just fine and is a big saving on my

fuel bills. But, for long journeys, it is a bit of a grind.

It has, however, given me the chance to compare it with a more premium rival, albeit hybrid rather than full electric (Vauxhall currently doesn't offer the Mokka as a hybrid).

The Volvo is more than £14,000 more expensive than the Vauxhall so it is perhaps not a fair fight and, while first impressions are impressive, the Vauxhall is lighter, more comfortable and more agile.

While the Volvo has an understated quality, I prefer a car with a bit of personality and for that reason I would still choose the funky-looking Mokka. If only it had a bigger battery...



## ► RENAULT CAPTUR

S-EDITION E-TECH HYBRID 145 AUTO

**By Gareth Roberts**

Plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) come with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than their non-plug-in hybrid cousins, leaving one with a distinct benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax advantage over the other.

Using regenerative braking as the main source of charging its battery, our test car – the one without a plug – offers CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 114g/km, equating to a 27% BIK rate for 2022/23.

Renault's PHEV Captur, however, offers CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 34g/km, putting it in 12% BIK bracket, thanks to a WLTP zero-emission range of 31 miles.

Without a plug, the Captur's hybrid powertrain employs three levels of energy regeneration and regenerative braking: battery regeneration during deceleration; selecting 'B' (brake) mode to recover more energy; and regenerative braking when the brake pedal is depressed.

The battery at the heart of the system is just 1.2kWh, so it will not complete the commute without drawing on the 1.6-litre petrol engine.

However, around town it will behave like a fully-charged PHEV and delivers a claimed fuel economy of up to 56.6mpg. Our car achieves around 47mpg.

## ► AUDI Q4 E-TRON

40 SPORT

**By Andrew Ryan**

The past month has seen our Audi Q4 e-tron's previously blemish-free record chalk up two minor indiscretions.

First came an issue with the powered boot. One evening, I had arrived at a supermarket to do my weekly shop and opened the boot using the button on the key fob so I could get some bags out.

But, when I pressed the button on the underside of the boot lid to close it as usual, it didn't move; instead it just started to beep at me.

There was no obvious reason for this. Nothing was blocking the boot lid from closing and nothing was different from the scores of times I'd used it before. It just wouldn't shut.

Following guidance from the manual I ended up closing the boot manually, which took a bit of effort to overcome the resistance offered by the boot's motors.

When I tried the boot the next day it worked perfectly, and has done so since.

The second gremlin came a couple of weeks later and involved the infotainment system.

Everything seemed to be switched on and working perfectly as the central unit would let me change the radio station and access Android Auto, but no sound would come out; the volume level was set to zero and trying to change it via the car's volume controls had no effect.

When I was scrolling through the menu in the centre of the Virtual Cockpit instrument panel I noticed it said the infotainment system was off, even though it clearly wasn't.

A quick Google of the issue led me to do a hard reset on the infotainment system – essentially the same as an IT department's favourite advice of 'have you tried rebooting?' – by holding the power button down for a prolonged period of time before it sprang back into life.

As with the boot, it's worked perfectly since then, so I'm not sure what caused the issues, or why they've gone away, but they have proved just to be minor inconveniences.





## ► VOLVO XC40

FIRST TEST

RECHARGE T5

By Matt de Prez

It might look like our XC40 has been put through a cheap car wash and had all the paint stripped off it, but this Thunder Grey T5 is actually here to replace our old Fusion Red T4.

While, at first glance, the paint finish might look a bit like primer, it's actually quite a smart looker up close. Especially with the gloss black trim. This range-topping XC40 plug-in hybrid packs an extra 51PS, while promising the same fuel economy and electric range as the T4.

The extra power comes from a software tweak to

the 1.5-litre three-cylinder petrol engine. The electric motor and battery are exactly the same as the T4's, so we're expecting between 18 and 24 miles on a full charge and fuel consumption in the mid-40s.

Volvo will only pair the T5 engine with its Ultimate trim level, priced at £49,095. Customers can specify whether they want chrome or gloss black details, 19- or 20-inch wheels and leather or part-leather upholstery. All the option packs previously offered on the XC40 come as standard at this level, including a panoramic sunroof, 360-degree parking camera and Harmon Kardon sound system.

First impressions of the new car are that the ride is much smoother than the T4's. Despite sitting on 20-inch alloys, the T5 seems to glide over bumps more gracefully than our previous car (which rode on 19s). We've also found the steering to be more precise and slightly weightier, improving the already impressive driveability.

The extra performance is welcome, knocking more than a second off the 0-62mph time, but we're still noticing an intermittent lag from the seven-speed automatic transmission that plagued the previous car.

From a running costs perspective, the T5 will cost drivers an extra £15 per month in benefit-in-kind tax compared with the T4 'Plus' while fleets will pay an extra £124 per year in Class 1A NICs (national insurance contributions) and 7p per mile in additional running costs. The latter is predominantly affected by the T5's steeper depreciation.

Despite being five years into its lifecycle, the XC40 remains a frontrunner in its segment.



## ► SUZUKI ACROSS

2.5 PHEV E-FOUR E-CVT

By Mike Roberts

Drivers who find choosing optional extras for their company car a bit of a chore would do well to consider the Suzuki Across.

Available in just one trim level with one engine, it's packed to the rafters with technology.

There's a nine-inch infotainment touchscreen with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and MirrorLink smartphone connectivity. There are heated front and rear leather seats, a heated steering wheel, electrically-powered tailgate, half-leather interior, dual zone air-con Bluetooth and a digital radio.

There are two things I rarely use on the car. I've tried them both more than once and they just don't work for me.

One is the automatic high beam, which only seems to turn off after I've already seen the car approaching, and the other is the lane-assist function as I like to feel as though I'm in control of the steering wheel.

It's a useful safety feature nonetheless.

Other safety credentials include a pre-collision system, dynamic radar cruise control, road sign assist, blind spot monitoring, rear cross-traffic

alert, plenty of airbags and eCall, a system that will contact the emergency services if the vehicle is involved in an accident.

Now the weather's improving, I'm looking forward to taking the car out on some longer trips to assess its handing in different scenarios.

Having said that, the car's E-Four electronic 4x4 system that offers extra grip in adverse driving conditions has given me reassurance when driving on icy country roads in recent weeks.

If you want some involvement in the options decision-making process, then you can choose the colour; there are six available.

In retail, it's not a cheap car at £46,000, but for company car drivers its 46 miles of zero-emission driving sees it sit in the 7% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bracket, meaning a monthly cost of £53 for a 20% taxpayer and £106 a month for a 40% taxpayer.





## ► MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

**By Jeremy Bennett**

Go to the App Store or Google Play on your mobile and you'll find the MyMazda app, a new version of which was launched with the introduction of connected services, currently only available for drivers of the MX-30 and 2021 CX-5.

It's common for electric cars and hybrids to have supporting apps. The Nissan Leaf I drove three years ago, and the Peugeot 3008 hybrid last year had them. But the Mazda app is the most intuitive and useful, without having to struggle to see its benefits. Download and sign in (scan your vehicle's

VIN number to use the connected services) and you're set to go.

Dealer location, vehicle data and booking a service are expected features, but a couple of others go beyond that. One connected service, the destination finder, allows you to input location on your mobile, then send it to the MX-30's sat-nav when you're ready to start.

Other, simpler, benefits include alerts informing you when the battery is charging and when the battery is full, tyre pressures, battery level and range and even when the doors are unlocked.

Other connected services include remote controls, such as adjusting the interior vehicle temperature and toggling the climate control, front and rear defrost on and off.

Note, access to connected services is free for three years from first registration of your car. Pricing beyond then is yet to be announced.

It's worth checking out the series of 'help' videos on YouTube explaining features of the app, the majority last less than a minute, ranging from installing it on your device and registering your car to booking a service and route planning.



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and previous  
reports



## ► CITROËN BERLINGO

CREWVAN ENTERPRISE BLUE HDI 100

**By Trevor Gehlcken**

Take a look at the picture (right) and you'll probably imagine that I'm on my way to the local tip. But no – these are all the items I deem essential and they follow me from test van to test van.

At Fleet News, we don't pussyfoot around with our vans and we try to push them to their limits, just as many of our readers' vehicles are pushed every day.

Although I have been a journalist all my life, I also double up as a transporter of household stuff around the country for my extended family, a mechanic when their cars break down, a gardener

when their plots become overgrown and a lugger-round of people when they need lifts.

So I make no apologies for my gear here – tool box, carpet (to lie on when looking under cars), trolley jack (the ones you get free with vehicles are next to useless), garden sacks, a set of wheels and a reel of electric cable, to name but a few items.

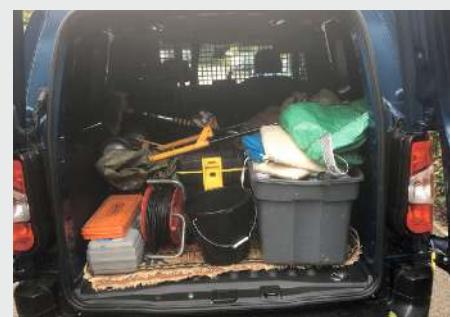
I was worried that with a second row of seats, my van would not be able to hold all my 'essential' gear, but in long wheelbase format and with the second row of seats up, there is still nigh on two cubic metres of loadspace and, as you can see, it all fits in nicely.

Usually, our test vans have a maximum of three seats and that allows me to turn down requests for lifts here and there from the family when I'm busy. And, while I like the extra three seats on offer in this van (there are two in the front), it has meant that I have had to grit my teeth on a few occasions and ferry people about when I really didn't have time.

Of course, as stated in a previous issue, the seats fold right down into the floor so on odd occasions, I admit I have done just that and sworn blind that I only have two seats. Naughty me!

Just a note on the maintenance front. This van seems to gobble up AdBlue like there's no tomorrow. I bunged in an £8 plastic container-worth when the van asked for it and, blow me, if a week later it wasn't asking for more.

To be fair, when I mentioned this to the guy in our local garage he said drivers of other van makes had made the same moan to him, so I won't mark Citroën down on this point. But then, two weeks later, it was asking for more again.



FleetNews



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# The AA looks ahead with customer experience front and centre

**The new year is always a time for reflection and goal-setting, but perhaps never more so than following the challenging couple of years businesses have faced. Looking ahead, and with the target of net zero by 2030 in mind, customer experience and innovation are going to be key themes for the fleet sector – as they will be across the wider business landscape. Here, Gavin Franks (right), business services director at the AA, shares his thoughts on how this will impact businesses and the opportunities ahead.**

**C**ustomer experience and innovation are two areas where we've seen some of the most significant examples of opportunity reshaping the landscape. When the pandemic hit, many businesses adapted quickly to survive and we saw them thrive. These adaptations came about from the changes in society, which, ultimately, impacted consumer expectations.

Central to this changing landscape is the acceleration of online retailing. The Ofcom report 'Online Nation 2021' revealed how the pandemic has sped up the digital shift.

Over the past couple of years, UK adults spent an average of three hours and 47 minutes online every day, with online shopping sales rising 48% to £113bn.



While, understandably, our reliance on online shopping went up when we couldn't leave home, it shifted consumer expectations and, even after lockdowns have lifted, many changes in attitudes and behaviour are here to stay.

We're seeing a change in consumer demand for more convenience, control and the availability of goods and services at times and locations that suit.

For fleets, drivers are expecting the same. We know fleet managers are feeling this, as our research report 'New Horizons', revealed that there's a clear trend for personalisation of experiences and flexibility, such as home delivery and



one point of contact. We found that 85% expect a service which is tailored to their organisation's own needs and 83% expect a service that matches the agility and flexibility that an individual consumer would expect.

With less than a decade for fleets to prepare for the Government's date for net zero emissions from new cars, we're also working to help make the transition as easy as possible for fleet managers and drivers.

The driver experience is central to this, and we're proud of our innovative charge post customer support service. Today, we work with seven providers, supporting more than 7,000 charge posts.

This means drivers can be confident they will get support at a charge post if they have any technical difficulties and can get back on their journey as quickly as possible.

It's only through better understanding of evolving customer expectations that we'll continue to meet high customer and driver satisfaction levels and innovation is critical to this. With, hopefully, a more settled period ahead, 2022 is going to offer further opportunities for businesses and fleets to adapt, evolve and enhance their operations for the future and the AA is no exception.

With customers at our heart, we're at the forefront of support for the transition to a greener, brighter future.



For all enquiries, please visit our website - [www.theaa.com/business](http://www.theaa.com/business) or call us on 0800 55 11 88'





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# Businesses should accelerate their electric vehicle uptake

**D**espite pledges made at COP26, reports indicate that there could be global warming of 4°C by the end of this century, if we remain on the current trajectory.

With nations such as China, South Africa and Indonesia saying they could need more time, it's easy for any UK business to wonder what small impact it can have on the global target in comparison to pollution levels around the world.

Yet, seeing the number of young people in Glasgow during COP26 so passionate about addressing climate change, should encourage us all to do everything we can.

Their view is, even the smallest gestures will contribute towards their futures and a key part of that is the speed by which we reduce pollution from transport.

According to Lee Brown, who heads up Grosvenor Group's 0Zone solution: "For companies to play their part in helping towards that 1.5°C goal, we need to see all businesses quickly moving their company car policies to ultra-low or zero-emission cars, unless there are genuine exceptions where there is no suitable option to support a driver's job role or if there are other inhibiting factors, such as drivers covering very high mileages.

"Businesses cannot just sit back and expect their employees to drive the change to electric vehicles (EVs) themselves, and it's important to create a car policy that offers drivers the best choice possible of battery (BEV) and



Lee Brown says wholelife costs give a clearer and more realistic picture

plug-in hybrid (PHEV) cars, while clearly presenting the facts to them.

"For example, BIK tax is presently attractive for cars emitting less than 50gm/CO<sub>2</sub> and the operating costs of EVs can be dramatically lower.

"However, operating costs for EVs may rise as energy tariffs increase, and I suspect the Chancellor's unwillingness to publish benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates beyond 2025 is partly down to him not wanting to show a future rise in BIK at this sensitive time.

"This all needs to be presented to drivers with an agenda to drive through the change now, rather than wait until the 2030 deadline."

As the UK's largest privately-owned contract hire and fleet management specialist, the Grosvenor Group's multi-award-winning 0Zone solution has been supporting companies with the transition to ultra-low emission and EVs for five years.

As a result, more than 55% of all new company cars delivered by the Grosvenor Group have plug-in technology.

Lee Brown added: "We always encourage companies to look at wholelife costs for their policies as they provide a far better reflection of the true financial picture for ultra-low emission and EVs.

"Their initial on-road cost is typically higher than traditional petrol- or diesel-engined cars, but during their entire time on fleet they work out to be more cost-effective, which is why we say that wholelife costs provide a more realistic financial assessment to base decisions on.

"Presenting the facts clearly and transparently is really important when helping companies make that vital shift to a zero emission future, and our approach has been a key factor in the very high numbers of businesses seeking our guidance."



Call: 01536 536 536

Email: [info@grosvenor-leasing.co.uk](mailto:info@grosvenor-leasing.co.uk)

Visit: [www.thegrosvenorgroup.co.uk](http://www.thegrosvenorgroup.co.uk)

**GROSVENOR**  
GROUP

FORWARD THINKING FOR FLEETS



# The pandemic accelerates fleets future-proofing their fleet management systems

**J**aama has reported its most successful year in onboarding rental and fleet customers with compliance, cost control and remote working being at the top of their list of requirements.

Several contract hire and leasing companies also signed up to Jaama's Key2 business solution which means it now works with more than 25% of the FN50.

"Many fleets had time to reflect during the pandemic and recognised the need to evolve and collect comprehensive data that is easily accessible to support informed strategic decisions," said Jaama managing director Martin Evans.

"Systems investment enables fleets to identify opportunity for improvements more quickly through better data collection and management. It makes sure companies make timely strategic decisions," he added.

An increasing number of Jaama's new customers bought Key2 with the objective of helping them to securely manage the growing amount of electronic documentation required to run fleets.

Drivers can now carry out daily inspections via Jaama's integrated mobile app which negates the need for paper defect reports, as information submitted automatically updates the back office Key2 system in real time. Reminders and actions are, by design, automatically triggered.

"The pandemic has increased the focus on reducing fleet paperwork through



Senior members of the Jaama team (from left): Michelle Morgan, development director, Martin Evans, managing director, James Thresher, IT director, and Stuart Mills, technical director

automation and remote functionality including apps, dashboards and workshop touchscreens.

"Some companies are opting for non-maintenance contract hire as mileages reduce, so proactive SMR management is vital and can only be achieved with the right systems in place to measure and monitor data," said Evans.

Jaama's Business Solutions contract hire, and leasing customers have also been focusing on using Key2 to improve supplier and customer integration.

Key2 can receive supplier information

via various methods including API integration to enable management of their entire operation with one consolidated view. Individual residuals and SMR experience can be overlaid against their quotation data to ensure quotation costings are correct.

With the ever-growing range of new car models being launched, leasing companies have also continued to embrace the empowerment of drivers to obtain and self-serve their own quotes through Key2 Quotes.

The module enables drivers to understand the transition from an internal combustion engine (ICE) car to a hybrid or EV by presenting all options side-by-side including BIK taxation in a transparent format.

"Many cash-for-car drivers are opting back into the company car choice list while schemes like salary sacrifice are growing in stature, providing tax savings for employers and employees," concluded Evans.



For further information visit [www.jaama.co.uk](http://www.jaama.co.uk)  
email [enquiries@jaama.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@jaama.co.uk) or call 0844 8484 333

## A Vehicle for Change

If there has been anything to resemble a silver lining in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic – it is undoubtedly the acceleration in us all reconsidering our lifestyle choices – and our impact on the planet.



This collective moment of reflection has, amongst other things, led to more opportunities for innovative mobility services.

We expect the demand for smart, flexible mobility to continue growing in-line with the ever-changing landscape and the crucial efforts of consumers and businesses to become more environmentally sound.

### The Toyota and KINTO Partnership

With these trends in mind, Toyota has a global vision to evolve into a mobility company – and that's where KINTO comes in.

Together, KINTO and Toyota are working towards a shared mission to deliver ever better, sustainable mobility for all and go 'beyond zero' emissions, to build a better future.

### A Gear Shift from Ownership to On-demand Usership

KINTO enables Toyota to go beyond its traditional sales and maintenance of vehicles to offer new mobility services.

This leading-edge approach gives customers access to the vehicles they want – when they want them – for as long as they want them.

### Enjoy Innovative Mobility Services

**KINTO Go** – KINTO Go brings public transport and new mobility solutions together, in one place, to make moving from A to B effortless. Our mobility platform will redefine the way your business moves, consolidating all forms of business mobility, reporting and policies into one single solution.

**KINTO Join** – KINTO Join revolutionises the way a company's employees travel to work. Our unique carpooling technology connects co-workers who wish to share their daily commutes. It enables

" We expect the demand for smart, flexible mobility to continue growing"

companies to incentivise behavioural change. Importantly, it helps to reduce your company's CO<sub>2</sub> footprint too!

**KINTO Share** – KINTO Share is a new corporate car sharing solution, powered via a smartphone or laptop, that will revolutionise the way your employees travel for work. At the click of a button and with keyless entry, employees simply choose from your fleet, book and go. It gives you the access to cars your employees need, anytime, anywhere!

**KINTO Flex** – Going beyond today's traditional leases, KINTO Flex offers outstanding flexibility and unrivalled convenience. You get the car you desire, without a lengthy commitment, delivered straight to your door in just one click.

**KINTO Ride** – An on-demand shuttle service with a difference. Our ride-hailing service combines quality, affordability, and convenience.

### Steering your Business in the Right Direction

The shift in mobility solutions is great for the corporate world too, as the traditional fleet management requirement is becoming ever more complex.

KINTO is helping fleet managers shift up the gears, very quickly. We offer cost-effective choices to support changing mobility needs with a holistic and flexible approach to transportation and service delivery.

We offer a comprehensive portfolio of fleet management services. So, whatever the size of your company and your fleet – KINTO provides solutions to simplify and assist the mobility of your business.

**Simple and smart mobility – That's KINTO.**

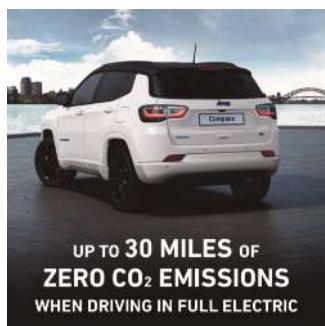
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Jeep® Compass 4xe PHEV: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined (g/km): 47-43; Combined fuel consumption (l/100km) 2.0-1.9; Power consumption (kWh / 100km): 16.3. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures are provided for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedure.

\*Standard warranty and roadside assistance valid for three years from the date of first registration of the vehicle. Free servicing covers the cost of parts, lubricants and labour as required by the manufacturer's scheduled servicing until the expiry of the three years or when the vehicle has had its first three scheduled services, whichever occurs first. Three year free servicing is available in conjunction with retail sales only until further notice.

^Business Contract Hire. Offer available on the Jeep® Compass PHEV MY22 range from £406 per month plus £2,436 initial rental excl. VAT & maintenance. Model shown Compass 1.3 T4 GSE 4xe PHEV S Model with white paint plus black roof at £916.67 excl. VAT: £451 per month plus £2,706 initial rental. Based on a 36 month term and 8,000 miles p.a. Excess mileage charges apply. Vehicles must be ordered between 25/01/22 and 31/03/22 and registered by 30/09/22. Subject to status. Guarantees may be required. T&Cs apply. Participating retailers only. Leasys, PO Box 4590, Slough, SL1 0WU. For the equivalent personal contract hire offers, simply add VAT to the monthly and initial rentals specified above.

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# LEASYS





# FUTUREPROOF YOUR FLEET WITH NORTHGATE'S UNIQUE MIX OF DEPENDABILITY, AGILITY AND INNOVATION.



**Northgate has been supporting the commercial vehicle needs of British businesses, public sector organisations and charities for over 40 years. We are the leading customer-centric rental company and fleet solutions provider.**

We continually invest in our people, technology, systems and products to ensure that we address all our customers' vehicle supply and fleet solution requirements.

Our range of subscription model vehicle products and our mobility solutions have been reviewed and expanded, to ensure that we can support our customers' fleet solutions needs across their entire fleet. Even on non-Northgate vehicles (YourFleet).

For businesses using a mix of acquisition methods, we offer mobility solutions for 'YourFleet', delivering service benefits, improved driver safety and experience and cost savings, across the entire fleet.

Recent solutions launched for YourFleet include Fleet Management, Vehicle Maintenance, Accident Management and Northgate Safe Driver – all of which can be tailored to a customer's fleet requirements.

Our Accident Management services – offer support for full fleet vehicles from First Notification of Loss (FNOL), recovery, repair, replacement vehicles, third party management and getting vehicles back on the road. It takes the hassle away from dealing with accidents and incidents.

Fleet Management has been designed for YourFleet vehicles. Whatever customers need, whether it's as straightforward as vehicle servicing or maintenance through to the more complex challenges of running a fleet day-to-day; our expertise helps reduce costs, minimise vehicle downtime and free-up time, so they can concentrate on their core business.

Following customer research, we developed Vehicle Maintenance for customers who don't need a full Fleet Management service but would benefit from access to our owned workshops and our network of over 2,000 approved suppliers for adhoc vehicle maintenance and servicing.

Customer research also identified a growing focus from fleets on reducing risk and supporting driver welfare. We've launched Northgate Safe Driver which helps fleets ensure vehicles and drivers remain complaint whilst on the road, understanding a driver's risk profile and providing driver training. It also reduces insurance costs for companies in many instances.

And, when owned YourFleet vehicles are ageing and becoming more costly to run, we also offer LCV disposal services. With our We Buy You Rent solution we can purchase vehicles hassle-free for an agreed fair market value.

Alternatively, customers can choose to put vehicles into our Van Monster Remarketing e-auctions alongside the ex-rental fleet. Both disposal solutions return cashflow to our customers alongside the option to rent new LCVs.

Thinking ahead, adding electric vehicles (EVs) to your fleet should form part of a wider mobility solution. At Northgate we're here to help customers cut through the noise and guide them on their Drive to Zero journey by analysing current fleets, explaining what is needed and providing turnkey solutions in areas such as charging infrastructure (commercial, domestic and on-the-go), energy, billing and how these elements can work with our flexible rental packages. Everything in fact, that you need to help switch to EVs when you're ready.

Northgate offers customers a range of unique services including fully Flexible Van Hire and 12months+ flexible agreements. Hires come with full Fleet Management, SMR and replacement vehicles included.

Our proposition is designed to let customers focus on their business whilst we focus on running their fleets.



**Neil McCrossan,**  
**Sales & Marketing Director, Northgate**

Find out more at [northgatevehiclehire.co.uk](http://northgatevehiclehire.co.uk)  
or call us on 0330 042 0903

**NORTHGATE**  
Vehicle Hire



# Free2move is here to simplify and guarantee your mobility

**S**ince 2016, Free2move has brought together a range of new services to satisfy the different mobility needs of its customers by giving them access to short-, medium- or long-term rentals, as well as solutions to support their transition to electric or hybrid vehicles and fleet management tools for businesses.

Over recent years, we've experienced increased urbanisation, greater environmental awareness and a more connected world. Free2move is acting and responding to these changes, enabling customers to manage both vehicles and drivers with innovative mobility solutions.

Being part of the Stellantis Group, Europe's largest car manufacturer, enables us to provide new mobility services that meet your needs. Our product line-ups are evolving rapidly, which allows our business partners to benefit from a wide range of solutions and services and develop their activity to be at the forefront of future mobility.

## Three reasons why partnering with Free2move will benefit you and your business

### 1: Build your fleet with Free2move Lease

Free2move Lease is the business contract hire solution for your fleet, providing a wide range of award-winning cars and vans, from four of the largest European manufacturers: Vauxhall, Peugeot, Citroën and DS Automobiles.

This comprises a range of hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs), maximising tax efficiency, protecting the environment, and positively contributing to your



business's Corporate Social Responsibility goals.

*"Our solutions are adapted for small and larger companies to provide flexibility, enabling our customers to benefit from the latest vehicles, within budget and with associated services adapted to their needs."*

### 2: Optimise your costs with Free2move Connect Fleet and PHEV Connect telematics

Our manufacturer in-built telematics system, Connect Fleet, provides you with deep insights into your fleet, to help you manage your drivers and vehicles efficiently. This technology enables you to drive your business forward and optimise operating costs, saving time and money.

*"Free2move Connect Fleet is a standalone service that can be integrated into your contract, with a single monthly payment, for both your vehicle and your telematics solution. It's an online platform that enables you to receive reports on your smartphone, tablet or laptop."*

Free2move recently launched its "PHEV Connect" solution, enabling you to improve your experience of managing your plug-in hybrid vehicles. This is a dashboard solution providing usage, charge behaviour and consumption data, so you can monitor and unleash the full plug-in hybrid potential, while decreasing your global total cost of ownership (TCO). This service is free during the first year.

### 3: Guarantee your company's mobility with Free2move Rent and Free2move Car on Demand

To meet your business needs, Free2move developed short- and medium-term rental services to cover all your business needs, for example when a temporary worker

joins your team and needs a vehicle quickly, or where you're experiencing an activity peak and need a temporary vehicle while awaiting a lease vehicle to be delivered.



Download Free2move App now and start driving your mobility:



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Call: 0345 313 3815

Email: [salesenquiries@free2move-lease.com](mailto:salesenquiries@free2move-lease.com)



# Reflex introduces EV:IE to guide fleets on their zero-emission journey

A ground-breaking new service from Reflex Vehicle Hire provides fleets with essential insights on the most suitable electric vehicles to replace their current diesel and petrol cars and vans

**E**V:IE (Electric Vehicle Information Exchange) is part of a suite of services that supports fleets as they transition from internal combustion-engined (ICE) vehicles in response to the Government's plan to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans, starting in 2030.

The service uses data about a company's fleet and journey patterns (including information collected through telematics) to identify cars and vans that could transition to plug-in technology immediately and also helps to create a longer term transition plan.

EV:IE gives simple, actionable insights derived from a wealth of complex data that it can analyse. The unique vehicle evaluation tool provides a solid platform on which fleet managers can build their EV strategy, particularly those in SMEs where it can be a struggle to find the time and resource to plan for the transition to plug-in vehicles.

As well as the elimination of the concerns around range, recharging and cost, a vital element of the service is an environmental impact summary, with a



**Electric Vehicle Information Exchange**

full calculation of potential CO<sub>2</sub> savings from making the switch.

Lisa Spong, Reflex Vehicle Hire Sales director, said: "EV:IE is the result of more than a year of discussions with fleet operators. It empowers a conversation between fleets, management and suppliers about the future, so businesses can prepare for 2030 and beyond.

"EV:IE saves managers hours of work trawling through data; instead, we provide an immediate vision of the future, with vital insights on fleet transition without the need for extensive additional analysis or research by under-resourced fleet departments. Our innovation provides a solid foundation on which to build the future of fleet, allowing

managers to maintain their focus on day-to-day operation of safe and efficient vehicles."

EV:IE is one element of the Reflex Vehicle Hire EV ecosystem, which can support every aspect of transition, from securing the latest EVs to installing charging point infrastructure, introducing payment solutions and linking to management software.

Initiatives include Reflex Renewable Drive, which provides managers with first-hand experience of the latest electric cars and vans, giving them essential insights to guide decision-making and generating valuable feedback for manufacturers.

EV:IE is part of Driive with Reflex, the award-winning suite of services, which also includes innovations such as speed limiters as standard, vehicle tracking, dashcams, and a distraction and tiredness monitoring system that can identify the use of hand-held devices behind the wheel.

Aaron Cawrey, head of fleet added: "Our early intervention to support EV adoption means more than one million miles have been driven in zero-emission capable vehicles from Reflex Vehicle Hire. EV:IE is the latest stage in our campaign to support the industry's transition while ensuring fleets remain safe and efficient, whichever fuel they use."

## Analysis using EV:IE focuses on three areas:

**EV Range** – EV:IE uses daily driving patterns to cross check against currently available plug-in cars and vans that deliver the required range, even considering the impact of payload and equipment.

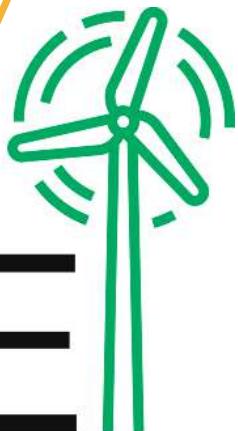
**Recharging** – EV:IE identifies daily charging requirements, where they occur, and provides valuable insights on optimum recharging time for managers, such as a quick 10-minute stop at a public charger to add the range needed for the day's tasks.

**Cost** – EV:IE avoids 'greenflation' through a detailed cost comparison between ICE and EV, including everything from funding to SMR. A highly detailed analysis includes variables such as the proportion of public/private charging, speed of the charging service and tariff being used. EV:IE establishes a clear TCO comparison between current models and potential replacements.

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# FLEETS OF TOMORROW



**Across the global community, we're facing the immense challenge of reducing humanity's impact on the planet. The need to drastically cut carbon emissions and prevent catastrophic environmental damage is now a global priority. Businesses must play a huge role in this, and in particular those operating in the transport sector.**

Greenhouse gas emissions in this sector have more than **doubled since 1970**, and growth is not slowing down. In fact, the global car fleet is due to **triple by 2050**.

## A SOLUTION WITHIN REACH

### 60%

If we were to achieve a 60% share of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrids across global fleets, the UN Environment Programme reports that 60 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> could be saved globally by 2050.

As technology progresses, the regulatory landscape becomes clearer and the necessary infrastructure becomes more rapidly deployed. This is vital to support the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), making this target achievable.

## OUR VISION

**Everything companies do has to become more sustainable. And we all have a huge role to play.**

Our vision is to help create a world where zero-emission vehicles are the norm, to make a difference to society with a strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda and to build a carbon neutral managed fleet by 2030.

Our scale, breadth of offer, independence, experience, and reputation means that we're well positioned to help the country transition away from petrol and diesel engines. Put simply, we're uniquely placed to help drive EV adoption.

## IT'S NO SECRET

**The road to decarbonisation for countries, companies and individuals is complex. Technology, tax and financing regulations are continually evolving, and they can be difficult to navigate.**

That's why, at Zenith, we work as trusted partners with our customers to bring clarity to complexity and provide recommendations on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis to develop bespoke transition strategies for a greener, brighter future.

Zenith has the expertise to support with every aspect of this transition.

Our end-to-end offering encompasses all vehicle types - from cars to vans, trucks and trailers, meaning we're able to provide tailored solutions for every business, whatever their needs. We also have a deep understanding of the consumer market and mindset, having launched our very own digital personal contract hire brand, ZenAuto.

## WE'RE LEADING THE WAY

**To truly achieve net zero and eliminate emissions, supporting our customers alone isn't enough. We must walk the walk, and look at our operations.**

We're proud to have achieved carbon neutral status with international recognition and certification from environmental consultancy Carbon Footprint. We're also a member of the EV100, a global initiative committed to accelerating the transition to EVs and making electric transport the new normal by 2030.

## NEXT STOP, NET ZERO

**Our own fleet is already**

### 50% BEV



**and will be ZERO emission by 2025.**

**We're extremely proud of the steps we've taken and the partnerships we've forged to deliver the fleets of tomorrow.**

Businesses choosing Zenith stay with us, because we provide them with a service like no other. We look forward to supporting our customers on their decarbonisation journeys so that – together – we can help to eliminate tailpipe emissions from the UK vehicle parc.

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# CommercialFleet



## Fiat Ducato tops the table in latest EuroNCAP crash tests

Dramatic improvement from 28% in 2021 to 88% this year due to autonomous emergency braking, speed assistance and lane-keeping systems, but not all vans have improved

PLUS: HUGE DEMAND AND REDUCED SUPPLY HITS RENTALS • LOGISTICS UK ADVICE • TESTED: IVECO EUROCARGO ML80E19

# CRASH AVOIDANCE TESTS ARE ENCOURAGING AS DUCATO LEADS THE WAY ON SAFETY SYSTEMS

Huge 60-point improvement for Fiat, but Nissan Interstar stays 'not recommended'

By Gareth Roberts

**N**issan insists it is committed to the "highest safety standards" after its Interstar large van was rated last in crash avoidance tests by Euro NCAP.

After assessing 19 vans for the first time last year, Euro NCAP has revisited the same vehicles, which represent the lion's share of light commercial vehicles (LCVs) sold in Europe.

Only one van assessed was rated as 'not recommended', the Nissan Interstar, as opposed to five last year.

The van safety rating assesses the performance and fitment of emergency braking, speed limiter and lane support systems, as well as seat belt reminder technology.

Vans achieving a score equal to or above 80% receive a platinum medal rating, 60% or more is gold, silver is 40% and over, and bronze 20% or more. Vans scoring below 20% are 'not recommended'.

Looking at the vans which received a 'not recommended' rating in 2021,

the Fiat Talento has been discontinued, the Vauxhall Movano is now built on a new Stellantis platform and gets a bronze medal this year, as does the Renault Master thanks to small, but notable, improvements to speed and lane assistance systems.

## INTERSTAR 'NOT RECOMMENDED'

Its twin, the Nissan Interstar (previously the NV400), also gets these improvements, however, still lacks autonomous emergency braking (AEB) and so remains in the 'not recommended' category with a score of just 18%.

Matthew Avery, chief research strategy officer at Thatcham Research, which administered the tests, was disappointed to see Nissan had not followed Renault's lead in offering a safety-critical AEB system.

"This is a great example where a manufacturer, in this case Nissan, has decided to dismiss the value of a critical safety feature and put marketing before engineering," he said. "That's disappointing and doesn't reflect the

good safety performance of the brand's passenger cars."

A Nissan spokesman told *Commercial Fleet* that the van maker is "committed to the highest safety standards and is continuously developing and adding safety technologies across its full range of vehicles to meet the needs of today's customers".

He continued: "We support Euro NCAP's long-term efforts in contributing to make roads safe, as is the case for Primastar that goes from bronze to silver due to active safety feature updates that helped us achieve this ranking."

"We are confident in our steady progress to deliver customers a more integrated and safer mobility in the van segment, just as we have done with the Townstar passenger version, which was recently granted a four-star rating."

New General Safety Regulation (GSR) legislation will require all new vans to be fitted with certain advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) by 2024.

In the meantime, Euro NCAP's commercial van ratings aim to encourage manufacturers to fit more advanced systems more quickly.

Fiat is the manufacturer that has raised its game the most since the first batch of test results was released in 2021.

Previously, the Ducato only just secured a bronze rating, with a score of 28%. But, in the latest results, the re-worked Ducato's score increased to 88% – the first van to receive a platinum rating.

Its 60 percentage-point increase was attributed to the all-round strong performance of its AEB and speed assistance systems, as well as its improved lane support capability, with the addition of lane-keep assist.

"Fiat has completely raised the bar this year," said Avery.

"To jump 60 percentage points from one assessment to the next is very impressive and we congratulate the brand for achieving the world's first platinum rating."

He added: "It is also good news that



**RESULTS ARE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. WE APPLAUD THE BRANDS THAT HAVE MOVED FORWARD**

**MATTHEW AVERY,  
THATCHAM RESEARCH**

# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's

## January market update

2022's new light commercial vehicle market got off to a slow start, falling 26.9% compared with January last year.

Against a backdrop of

continued semiconductor shortages, rising raw material and energy costs and erratic fleet renewals, January proved as unpredictable as ever.

The 17,566 new registrations in January was the weakest start to a year since 2013. This follows what was the best January for 31 years in 2021. Registrations of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) accounted for 3.7% (647 units) of the overall total, up 21.4% on the same point last year.

The slow performance saw registrations in all sectors decrease. Vans below two tonnes saw a decline of 53.9% on the same period last year; those of 2.5-3.5 tonnes (nearly 66% of all vans registered in the month) fell by 29.8%, Pick-ups fell by 17.4% and vans between 2.0-2.5 tonnes recorded a 17.1% fall.

Ford has started 2022 positively, with the Ford Transit securing second spot and the Ford Ranger in fourth. Vauxhall was the UK's best-selling electric LCV manufacturer again in January, registering 160 e-LCVs.

Although the outlook for LCV registrations in 2022 is encouraging, there is a concern that the cost-of-living squeeze and higher interest rates could result in a slowdown in online shopping as customers tighten their belts. This could slow the need for more vans to support the home delivery market.

Market unpredictability will remain an issue, but component and raw material shortages will slowly improve as we move through the year.

## Used LCV market overview

Although the number of units sold dropped substantially in January, average auction prices fell by only 0.4%. Driven by a dearth of quality Euro 6 stock, average prices at auction remain just shy of £10,000.

As was the case for all of 2021, demand for Euro 6 stock will continue as makers struggle to supply new vehicles.

Businesses will prioritise the de-fleeting of hard-worked and now ageing Euro 5 stock that should have been replaced at the beginning of the pandemic.

The increase in older, higher mileage and poorer condition stock in the used market will inevitably result in a reduction in demand as the year progresses.

# Glass's .....

Part of Autovista Group



Ford's Transit Custom moved from silver to gold rating



Testers hope the Peugeot Boxer will go on to mimic some Ducato features



Nissan's Interstar received an 18% 'not recommended' rating

this platinum rating has been achieved by a shared van platform within the Stellantis Group.

"The Ducato's performance has the potential to benefit a huge chunk of the market because the Vauxhall Movano, Peugeot Boxer and Citroën Relay share the same production platform. We hope the Ducato features will be made available on these vans too."

## OTHER HEADLINE PERFORMERS

Results showed that other manufacturers have also reacted positively to calls for improved van safety.

Eight other vans increased their score in 2022, with five achieving a higher medal rating.

Ford's Transit Custom, currently Britain's best-selling van, moved from the silver band into gold.

The Renault Trafic and Vauxhall Movano also recorded

significant score improvements.

The Trafic, which with 11% was not recommended in 2021, scored 45% this time around, thanks mainly to the addition of AEB and lane support technology, earning it a silver rating. The Movano increased its score from 7% to 33%.

"These results are a step in the right direction," said Avery, "and we applaud the brands that have moved forward.

"But the fact remains it's difficult to buy a new car without advanced driver assistance systems, whereas it's still difficult to buy a van with ADAS systems.

"These are two vehicle types that share the same road space, so they should have parity.

"With next year's commercial van safety rating assessing standard fit safety systems rather than available technology,

van manufacturers still have a lot of work to do.

"Together with Euro NCAP, we're raising the van safety bar much higher in 2023.

"This will support our determination to reduce the frequency of van collisions, create greater safety system parity between vans and cars, and, ultimately, protect other road users from serious injury or death."

He concluded: "The 2022 results clearly show fleet operators and business owners which vans they should be choosing.

"Specifying ADAS technology has a value. It can help prevent an expensive vehicle being off the road for repairs, drivers being off sick, and any reputational damage that can be caused to a company after an accident.

"ADAS has the power to keep businesses moving and delivering for their customers."

# HIGH DEMAND AND REDUCED VEHICLE SUPPLY HITS RENTAL SECTOR

Hire companies and fleets are facing challenges as impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic combine. *John Lewis* reports

**L**ong waits for new vehicles to be delivered are hitting van and truck rental businesses hard.

"I've never known anything like it," says Dawsongroup Truck and Trailer managing director John Fletcher. "It's horrendous."

Some truck manufacturers are quoting 15-month delivery times, he says; always assuming that they will allow customers to place an order. "In many cases, order books are shut," he adds.

"If you're looking for a manufacturer to deliver a 7.5-tonner then you won't see it before the end of December."

"If you're expecting a tractor unit to be delivered this year, forget it; it's not going to happen."

"I think supply problems will be part of the landscape for the next couple of years and they're restricting our ability to grow."

Dawsongroup has 11,000 trucks and trailers on its books; 60% of them are out on contract hire

while the remainder are rented to customers.

"I would say that our total fleet is down by 1,000 compared with 18 months-to-two years ago," Fletcher says; and the vehicle shortage is making it difficult to bring it back up to strength.

Keith Shorter, newly-appointed van and trucks director at Europcar Mobility Group UK, adds: "We're having to wait 10 months for some vans to be delivered."

## REPLACEMENT PARTS

Other items vital to rental fleets are hard to come by too, he says. Replacement parts – especially those that contain semiconductors – can be difficult to obtain.

"As a consequence, we've had some vehicles off the road for up to 60 days," Shorter adds.

Fortunately, Europcar took delivery of a large quantity of vehicles just before the Covid-19 pandemic struck. "This means that the average



age of our fleet is around 20 months compared with 18 months pre-pandemic," says Shorter.

The business is, nevertheless, having to extend the life of some of the vehicles on its books to satisfy customer demand.

"We're having to put vans through MOT tests for the first time," Shorter says.

Fletcher points to a lack of workshop capacity, with technicians in short supply.

"Workshops don't have enough hours available to service vehicles," he states.

Europcar is addressing the components shortfall and burnishing its environmental credentials at the same time through a renewed agreement with salvage and green parts provider Synetiq.

The three-year deal will see parts from damaged Europcar vehicles passed to Synetiq and recycled, subject to a variety of safeguards, for use in repairs to other Europcar vehicles.

## DEMAND HIGH, SUPPLY LOW

The struggle to obtain vans and trucks is occurring at a time when businesses all over the country are trying to rent because they, too, are waiting for the vehicles they need. They may be disappointed.

Dawsongroup has, in Fletcher's words, "pulled the wagons into a circle".

It is continuing to service the needs of existing customers, but is restricted in terms of signing up new ones because of the vehicle shortage.

"We hate having to say 'no' and in some cases we're able to help people, but the numbers are small," he says.

So what's the impact on rental rates? "They





## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Neil McCrossan, Sales & Marketing Director – Northgate Vehicle Hire



If anyone doubted the benefits of maintaining flexibility in how company vehicle fleets are sourced and operated, the semiconductor shortage has driven home the importance of these considerations.

We've seen many customers use our subscription services model to flex fleet sizes in the short- and medium-term – as well as to provide certainty of supply over these and longer periods.

We've also helped customers change the composition and mix of fleets to match altered circumstances. Ownership and contract hire fleet models lack the flexibility to dynamically vary fleet size and mix in this way.

Customers tell us they recognise lifetime cost and cashflow benefits from our pay-for-what-you-use, subscription options.

Flexibility doesn't equal lack of management and control. We've long recognised that our responsibility to customers extends well beyond providing vehicles, with full fleet and accident management services from our workshops and bodyshops. Telematics, replacement vehicles, breakdown cover, inspection apps, risk management, driver training and cost-saving fuel cards are among the range of support services provided to customers across their whole fleet.

There is massive interest in electric vehicles (EVs). At Northgate, we're here to help customers cut through the noise and guide them on their Drive to Zero journey by analysing current fleets, explaining what is needed and providing turnkey solutions in areas such as charging infrastructure (commercial, domestic and on-the-go), energy, billing and how these elements can work with our flexible rental packages.

Everything, in fact, that you need to help switch to EV when you're ready.

Our aim is to deliver maximum flexibility, maximum service experience and maximum control over costs for our customers.

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have certainly got a lot firmer," says Fletcher.

"If you look across the industry I would say that they are at least 10%-to-12% higher on average than they were before the pandemic," he estimates.

However, rental fleets such as Dawsongroup's are restricted in their ability to increase them by the existing supply agreements they have with key corporate clients.

Such agreements mean hire rates are fixed and capped. Attempts to increase prices could backfire badly long-term. "Fleet customers have got long memories," adds Fletcher.

Rates need to rise nevertheless, he says, because of the degree to which van and truck prices have rocketed upwards thanks to escalating raw material costs.

"In late 2019, we were warned prices could go up by 16% as a result of Brexit," says Fletcher.

The soaring cost of steel, rubber and virtually every other item that goes into a vehicle meant that prices rose by about that percentage in 2021 anyway, he adds.

Northgate says the issue has encouraged fleets to change the composition and mix of their fleet to keep their businesses moving.

"The semiconductor shortage has reinforced the importance of maintaining flexibility in how company vehicle fleets are sourced and operated," says Neil McCrossan, Northgate sales and marketing director. "Outright ownership and contract hire fleet models lack the flexibility to dynamically vary fleet size and mix."

"We've seen many customers use our

subscription services model to flex fleet sizes in the short- and medium-term – to help fill any shortfall in their own supply."

Rental fleets that are now disposing of vans and trucks are enjoying healthy residuals thanks to the strength of the used market.

### TRUE PICTURE

While that is to be welcomed, residuals have to be viewed over several years to get a true picture, Fletcher contends.

"Go back to 2016 and we were losing money on every truck we were selling," he recalls.

While used values may be rosy now, the peaks and troughs experienced over the past six-to-eight years, in effect, mean that when Dawsongroup disposes of trucks today, it is barely breaking even, says Fletcher.

"We're also seeing used prices soften a little now," he adds. Some firms that usually buy new but were considering buying used instead, appear to be gritting their teeth, continuing to run what they have already got despite higher maintenance costs and simply waiting for their factory-fresh successors to arrive.

Despite the unrelenting demand for vehicles, Dawsongroup is not prepared to retain rental trucks for so long that they become unreliable, stresses Fletcher.

So its hire fleet has not aged to the extent that might be expected given the paucity of replacements. "The average age of our trucks has gone up by two months over the past year or so," he says.

Europcar has some 11,000 light commercials for rent; it does not venture above 3.5 tonnes, despite Shorter's truck-related job title.

"That's up considerably from approximately 4,500 three or four years ago," he says.

Home delivery was rising prior to the pandemic. Covid-19 served to put rocket boosters under it.

Demand for rental vans to deliver all those parcels and packages has risen and interest in long-term rental – a concept pioneered by Northgate sometime ago – has grown, Shorter contends.

It is no more expensive than contract hire, he asserts, and its flexibility makes it easy for customers to hand vans back at short notice without having to negotiate the difficulties inherent in extricating themselves from a lease agreement.

Nor need rental clients fear that all they will be able to get is a box on wheels that is not tailored to their needs.

Last year Europcar supplied 50 vans to BCS Group on long-term rent equipped with Geotab telematics systems and SureCam dashboard cameras.

The package includes reports on high-risk driving behaviours such as harsh acceleration, harsh braking and speeding, which allow driver training to be focussed to best effect. Monitored, too, are sustained periods of engine idling.

### ELECTRIC VANS INTEREST

The vehicle shortage is coinciding with rising interest in electric vans as restrictions on exhaust emissions tighten around the country.

To help meet this, Europcar has just managed to add 100 LEVC (London Electric Vehicle Company) VN5 vans to its portfolio.

The newcomers are fitted with a 1.5-litre petrol-powered range extender which gives them a range of 304 miles, says Europcar, and enables them to travel for more than 60 miles on zero-emission battery power only.

"Their availability means businesses can try before they buy without having to commit to leasing or outright purchase, which gives them the chance to understand how electric vans will work for them and their drivers," says Ron Santiago, Europcar Mobility Group UK managing director.

Furthermore, the range extender does away



**IT INCREASINGLY LOOKS AS THOUGH CHARGING TIME (ON ELECTRIC VANS) IS AS IMPORTANT AS RANGE**

DANNY GLYNN,  
ENTERPRISE FLEX-E-RENT



Europcar took delivery of a large number of vehicles before the pandemic struck

with any ongoing concerns about range anxiety.

Enterprise Flex-E-Rent managing director Danny Glynn adds: "We bought more electric vans in 2021 than we have ever done, and we'll buy twice as many this year as we did last. We'll soon have 450."

"Fleets are going through the process of learning how best to use them and it increasingly looks as though charging time is as important as range."

Fletcher says operators are now making more serious enquiries about electric trucks.

"We're a little way away from renting out a fleet of them, but we may be able to supply them in ones and twos," he adds.

However, the recent cut in plug-in van grants could hamper efforts to help businesses transition to electric, according to Northgate's McCrossan.

"We are increasingly spending more time working with companies to evaluate how EVs fit into their current fleet mix," he says. "There is a growing interest from companies in reducing their fleet van emissions and working towards Net Zero. With this momentum building, it's disappointing the grants have been reduced."

He adds: "Identifying whether companies can operate electric van alternatives is involved and takes time. We work with companies to build a picture of daily vehicle mileages and payloads, average journey length and speed. Colleagues at ChargedEV then take the company through site surveys, groundworks, installations and the different types of charge points on offer to provide a complete picture of onboarding an electric fleet. This includes workplace charging solutions for car and van fleets."

### SUPPORT FOR FLEETS

Backing for fleet customers is manifesting itself in ways other than introducing electric models and

additional onboard technology, with Fraikin launching a 24/7 year-round service support centre at its UK headquarters in Coventry, thereby moving away from using third-party contractors for out-of-hours calls.

Caroline Harrison, service support centre manager at Fraikin, says: "We're now able to guarantee that a Fraikin employee is available on the other end of the phone at all times, taking ownership of any customer issues and following them through until they are resolved."

Martin Benning, fleet compliance officer at long-standing Fraikin customer, Macfarlane Packaging adds: "Being able to speak directly to Fraikin out-of-hours provides our operation with an extra level of reassurance, which can only be a good thing."

In another bid to improve fleet support and reduce its reliance on third-party suppliers, last year saw Fraikin re-open its service and repair workshop in Bristol.

It now has six such workshops dotted around the country.

While rental vans and trucks may be thin on the ground, that is not to say that nothing is available.

Glynn says: "We run a major rental fleet, we can still find vehicles, and we can provide as many as 50 at short notice, although they may not always be to the exact specification the customers is looking for."

The abandonment of Covid-19 social distancing means businesses are going back to sending two or three workers out to a job in the same van rather than allocating a van to each, he points out.

As a consequence, vehicles that are no longer wanted are gradually trickling back to rental fleets, and reducing the intense pressure on availability; something rental operators and their clients can only welcome.

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A great alternative to the commitment of contract hire or ownership, ideal for uncertain economic times. The longer the term, the better the rate we can offer.

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# Are you ready for the CAZ revolution?

'Try before you buy' offer on LEVC vans should appeal to commercial fleets

**R**esearch commissioned by Europcar Mobility Group UK found that more than 87% of fleet managers believe their business will be impacted by the growing number of clean air zones (CAZ) across the UK. And the cost implications of this could be considerable.

The challenge is how to build and manage a fleet that meets CAZ and London ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) requirements, but is also flexible and cost-effective. And all while vehicle supply is constrained.

Having the ability to manage costs and 'flex' fleet by using rental, short and long-term, in response to fluctuations in demand will be key.

Having access to the latest electric vehicles (EVs), without having to make long-term financial commitments, will also be crucial.

Responding to these challenges, Europcar is not only increasing the share of green vehicles in its fleet; it is also making a significant investment in vehicle charging at the Europcar network around the UK as well as taking an innovative approach to cutting down emissions in its operations, with the use of e-bikes for drivers delivering and collecting vehicles.

## Europcar adds 100 LEVC VN5 vans to commercial fleet

Demonstrating its clear intent to deliver electrified and flexible transport solutions for commercial vehicle (CV) users, Europcar added 100 London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC) hybrid



"Access to the latest EVs, without having to make long-term financial commitments, will also be crucial"

electric VN5 vans to its Vans & Trucks fleet at the start of 2022.

Available for long-term rental from its Vans & Trucks locations across the UK, with a particular focus on the cities where CAZs are in force or scheduled for 2022, this new fleet addresses an urgent need among CV users.

## Research findings show:

- For 89% of businesses a quarter or more of their fleet need to enter a CAZ more than once a week
- Just less than 30% of businesses had not calculated the potential cost for their fleet to enter a CAZ or the extended London ULEZ
- 40% said that they intend to use long-term/flexible rental as a way of increasing the number of clean air zone-friendly vehicles in their fleets

They offer businesses the flexibility to 'try before they buy', without having to commit to lease or outright purchase, giving the chance to really understand how electric will work for them and their drivers.

Long-term rental of the VN5 also provides important financial flexibility while the UK economy remains uncertain. Plus, crucially, the VN5 gives customers a compliant solution eliminating the need to factor in additional costs for entering CAZs.

The VN5 is a truly innovative workhorse that delivers great storage capacity as well as the flexibility of LEVC's eCity Range-Extender to eliminate the range anxiety that is holding back many commercial vehicle users from moving to electric.

Europcar has availability for immediate delivery so call the team now on 0371 384 0140.

Download the whitepaper at  
[services.europcar.co.uk/CAZwhitepaper](http://services.europcar.co.uk/CAZwhitepaper)

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[businesssolutions@europcar.com](mailto:businesssolutions@europcar.com)

**Europcar**  
VANS & TRUCKS

# ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

**Q** Can you please explain how, as an employer, I document an employee's paternity leave for Working Time purposes?

**A** Regulation 13 of The Working Time Regulations 1998 says that sick leave, maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave cannot be used to bring down the average weekly working time. Employers must enter 48 hours for each week and eight hours for each day of such leave.



ISTOCK/PABST ELL



ISTOCK/SCHARFSINN86

**Q** Can a workshop fitter holding a valid Cat C licence drive a bus that requires a Cat D to and from MOT tests and give road tests after fitting new brakes etc.?

**A** There was previously a concession for holders of a Category C licence to be able to drive a Category D (passenger carrying) vehicle, provided the entitlement had been held for at least two years. The vehicle

must have been either defective or damaged and being driven to a place of repair or on a road test following repair or inspection. Passengers unconnected with such work were not allowed to be carried.

However, this concession has been removed by the Third EU Driving Licence Directive, meaning the driver now has to hold the correct type of licence for the vehicle being driven.

## The official health and safety at work app aimed at SMEs

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has announced the release of a bespoke mobile app designed for small businesses or anyone new to health and safety. This app is aimed at helping users to understand the law, their health and safety rights, their responsibilities and how to protect employees.

Created in partnership with The Stationery Office (TSO), the app contains core guidance on what the

law requires and the responsibilities an employer has under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

This app is not aimed at health and safety professionals, consultants or those looking for detailed information on health and safety law.

HSE's mission is to prevent death, injury and ill health in the workplaces of Great Britain.

Ensuring that guidance is available and accessible in a variety of

formats is central to achieving these goals.

The app can be downloaded on an Apple or Android device from either the iOS or Google Play Store and contains three main sections:

### 1. THE HEALTH AND SAFETY TOOLBOX (HSG268)

This section explains what the law requires and the responsibilities an employer has. It provides an over-

view of all potential risks, so an employer can identify which areas are applicable to their organisations. Users can easily navigate through the content and find the guidance using the built-in search function. There are a number of topics covered within this section including how to manage health and safety; electrical, fire and gas safety; risk assessments; harmful substances; working in confined spaces; working at height and work-related stress.

### 2. A GUIDE TO MANAGING RISK

This section provides a simple step-by-step guide and practical advice on how to manage risk within an organisation. It includes steps needed to manage risk; identifying hazards; assessing and controlling the risks; recording findings and reviewing the controls as well as including risk assessment examples and templates.

### 3. WORK-RELATED STRESS

This section includes a condensed version of HSE's stress management standards approach. Designed for smaller organisations, it comprises a step-by-step guide to manage work-related stress for small organisations (up to 50 employees), medium-size organisations (51-250 employees) and medium-size organisations working from multiple sites.



ISTOCK/FIZKES



# IVECO EUROCARGO ML80E19

Well-proven driveline and quality day cab should ensure Eurocargo's continued success

By Tim Campbell

**A**sk most 7.5-tonne gross vehicle weight (gvw) operators to name their top trucks, chances are the Iveco Eurocargo and the Daf LF will be in the mix somewhere and that's been the case for the past three decades. Of course, the products have changed over this time, but the rivalry remains, although the Daf LF has managed to maintain a lead over its arch rival.

Today's Iveco Eurocargo is a far cry from the old Cargo and has undergone a series of facelifts, including the latest driveline upgrade reflecting the recent changes in legislation requiring the Euro VI 'Step E' emissions enhancement.

Another feature of the 7.5-tonne market is the increasing desire for operators to 'experiment' with other gvw's between 3.51 tonnes and up to

12 tonnes, basically within the N2 category and their driver licencing-friendly weights.

As a consequence, we will look at the latest generation eight-tonne version with the new 'Step E' engine based on the Tector 5 diesel rated at 190PS, the ML80E19.

## DRIVELINE

Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the Iveco product line-up over the years has been its engine and driveline combination, with all the engines manufactured by its globally-recognised 'in-house company' Fiat Power Train (FPT) Industrial.

The Tector 5 is a great example of this, rated at a maximum power of 190PS (37kW) @ 2,200rpm and a maximum torque of 680Nm @ 11,00rpm.

The power curve shows the maximum power is 'held' across the rev range from 2,000 to 2,200rpm and the torque 'holds on' from an impressive 1,100-to-1,600rpm, providing a useable driving range. The Tector 5 (F4A) displaces 4,485cc and uses the famous Iveco HI-SCR emissions control as well as turbocharging and aftercooling, enabling it to reach the latest Euro VI E standard.

There are three gearboxes to choose from, one fully automatic, one automated and a synchronised manual – a full set of options.

Most operators specify the six-speed automated Astronic with an overdrive top gear. The manual gearbox is simply the same gearbox without the automation system 'sitting on top' of it.

The automatic offering is completely different and comes in the form of the Allison S2500. This is five-speed with a maximum torque input of 780Nm, well inside the 680Nm developed by the Tector 5 engine.

## CAB

The truck can have a day or sleeper cab. There's even a crew cab variant. The vast majority of UK

operators will specify the day cab. This features a three-way adjustable driver's seat with integral head restraint and a dual fixed passenger seat with 50/50 split back rest with head restraints. Overhead there are lockers with doors and document storage on a shelf on passenger side as well as the rear cab wall.

Outside, there's a convenient one-step cab entry, heated rear view mirrors including two wide-angle, one kerb view and one front view mirror, and LED daytime running lights.

## WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS

There are six wheelbases available on the day cab and four on the sleeper. The day cab wheelbases range from the tipper-friendly 3,105mm to the distribution-focused 4,815mm.

This translates into overall lengths of between 5,933mm to 8,835mm.

Kerb weights for the day-cabbed ML80E19 start at 3,500kgs and longest wheelbase is 150kgs heavier. If you require the sleeper cab, these weights are increased by a further 130kgs, resulting in a sleeper cab long wheelbase weighing in at 3,780kgs.

As far as tyres are concerned, the Eurocargo comes with 225/75R 17.5 all round as standard with a couple of options if required.

## SAFETY AND BRAKES

The ML80 has 330 x 32mm ventilated disc brakes all round actuated by an air over hydraulic circuits and there's also an engine exhaust brake as standard.

## SUMMARY

The Iveco Eurocargo has always been one of the top-selling light trucks and it's easy to see why – the combination of a well-proven driveline and a good day cab will ensure continued success.

# THE LAST WORD

## EVAN MORRIS

TRAINING MANAGER, RED DRIVER RISK MANAGEMENT

Sport, in general, and motorsport in particular, is a passion for Morris who became a fully qualified driving instructor when aged 23 and has been developing his skills ever since

**The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self? Your career choice must be based around what you enjoy. I have been fortunate to work in an industry I love.**

**The song I would have on my driving playlist is? Black Velvet by Alannah Myles (obviously set at a volume to not be a distraction!).**

**If money was no object I'd love to be involved in international motorsport of some description.**

**A book that I would recommend others read is? The Highway Code.**

**My hobbies and interests are motorsport and football.**



**My first memory associated with a car? Visiting Oulton Park at a young age and hearing very, very loud single-seater racing cars.**

**If I were made transport minister for the day I would bring back B+E driving tests (the Government recently scrapped these tests which relate to towing); mandate that in-car training is needed every 10 years and for it to be conducted by a qualified instructor.**

**My favourite movie quote is? "You're gonna need a bigger boat" – Jaws.**

**My pet hate is? Unqualified people giving advice about something they clearly know nothing about.**

**“YOUR CAREER CHOICE MUST BE BASED AROUND WHAT YOU ENJOY. I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO WORK IN AN INDUSTRY I LOVE”**

**Why fleet?** It's fast-paced and challenging. In terms of fleet driver training, everyone comes to us having passed their driving test, but we see a huge difference in their skills behind the wheel – I love the challenges this role brings.

**How I got here?** After completing a sports studies degree (and with a huge passion for cars and motorsport), I decided to enter driver training. I was a fully qualified driving instructor at the age of 23 and my passion for motorsport saw me start competing in amateur circuit racing in 2008 and navigating in road rallies. I've attained my HGV/PCV driving licences, passed advance driving test from the Institute of Advanced Motorists and RoSPA, and spent two years as a driving examiner for DVSA.

**Latest products, developments and achievements?** One of the great things about working for RED is that we are constantly evolving our offering, adding new courses and modules to cater for changing demand. This could be EV driving or our new towing courses.

**My company in three words?** Innovative, adaptable, focused.

**Career influence?** I made the decision that the driver training industry was a career choice and not a default job. I have trained and continue to develop myself to ensure I keep pace with the ever-changing industry. Self-motivation and being career-focused have been my biggest influence.

**What makes a good manager/leader?** The ability to listen to staff and implement change for the better.

**Advice to fleet newcomers?** Don't think that driver training is just about telling someone how to drive. Fleet driver training is about helping a driver to understand risks, such as fatigue, concentration, distractions or maybe a physical risk from the road layout.

**If I wasn't in fleet?** Sports development within communities.

**Next issue:** Chris Connors, head of facilities and fleet at Countryside Properties

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